



WEST VIRGINIA

Higher Education Policy Commission

Meeting Agenda

September 19, 2025

Members

Michael J. Farrell, *Chair*

Andrew A. Payne III, *Vice Chair*

E. Gail Pitchford, *Secretary*

James W. Dailey, II

James Denova

Diana Lewis Jackson

Michele L. Blatt, *Ex-Officio*

Steve Roberts, *Ex-Officio*

Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Chancellor

WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION

AGENDA

September 19, 2025 | 9:00 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

By Phone: 1-304-513-3373 and enter the phone conference ID 475 930 981#

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- I. Call to Order
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DRAFT MINUTES

WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION

June 27, 2025

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Michael Farrell convened a meeting of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) on June 27, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., in the David K. Hendrickson Conference Center, Room 1220, Building 2000 of the West Virginia Regional Technology Park, 2001 Union Carbide Drive, South Charleston, West Virginia, and by Microsoft Teams videoconference and conference call. The following Commission members participated: Michele Blatt, Ex-Officio; James Dailey; James Denova; Michael J. Farrell; Diana Lewis Jackson; Andrew A. Payne; and E. Gail Pitchford. Absent was Christina Cameron, Ex-Officio. Other participants included university representatives, Chancellor Sarah Armstrong Tucker, and Commission staff.

Vice Chairman Farrell secured a quorum and welcomed all participants to the meeting.

II. Chairman's Report

A. Election of Officers

Commissioner Dailey reported the recommendation of the Nominating Committee of the following slate of officers:

- Chair: Michael Farrell
- Vice Chair: Andrew Payne
- Secretary: E. Gail Pitchford

There being no other nominations, Vice Chairman Farrell entertained a motion to approve the slate of officers for the upcoming year.

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the nominated candidates to serve as officers of the Higher Education Policy Commission from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

B. 2026 Meeting Dates

Commissioner Pitchford moved to approve February 26, June 12, October 2 and December 4 as the 2026 meeting dates. Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion. Motion passed.

III. Chancellor's Report

Chancellor Tucker provided a brief update. She thanked Christina Cameron for her service on the Commission, and welcomed Steve Roberts, who will serve as an ex-officio member of the Commission beginning July 1, 2025.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2025, Commission meeting. Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion. Motion passed.

V. Update from Interagency College-Going Rate Workgroup: Family Engagement Committee

Ms. Jodi Oliveto, Senior Policy and Program Officer, provided an update on the activities of the Interagency College-Going Rate Workgroup. The Workgroup is a collaborative effort between the Commission and the West Virginia Department of Education.

VI. Approval of Appointments to the West Virginia Regional Technology Park Board of Directors

Chancellor Tucker presented the agenda item and recommendations for reappointment beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028:

- Tim O'Neal
- Jack Rossi

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the appointments to the West Virginia Regional Technology Park Board of Directors.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VII. Approval to Offer Bachelor's Degree Programs

Dr. Chris Rasmussen, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Denova moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Laurel College of Technology to begin offering bachelor's degree programs with the implementation of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing beginning Spring 2026.

This approval expires two years from the date of Commission approval if the program is not fully implemented at that time.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VIII. Approval of Institution Capital Assessments for Fiscal Year 2026

Ms. Misty Price, Vice Chancellor for Finance, presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Dailey moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the institution capital assessments for Fiscal Year 2026 as shown in Table 2.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

IX. Review of Tuition and Fees

Ms. Price presented the informational agenda item.

X. Review of Fiscal Year 2026 Institutional Operating and Capital Budgets and Approval of Institutional Capital Budgets

Ms. Price presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the Fiscal Year 2026 institutional capital budgets.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XI. Approval of Fiscal Year 2026 Higher Education Policy Commission Division Operating Budgets and Higher Education System Initiatives

Ms. Price presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Dailey moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the Fiscal Year 2026 division operating budgets and Higher Education System Initiatives.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XII. WVNET Service and Support Overview

Mr. Steven White, Executive Director of WVNET, presented the informational agenda item.

XIII. Approval of Fiscal Year 2025 WVNET Budget

Mr. White presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Denova moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the Fiscal Year 2026 West Virginia Network for Educational Telecomputing budget.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XIV. Approval of Revisions to Commission Rules

Mr. Joseph Jenkins, General Counsel, explained the proposed revisions to the following rules.

A. Series 40, Procedural Rule, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves revisions to Series 40, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, to be filed with the Secretary of State for the 30-day public comment period and if no substantive comments are received, that the Commission extends its final approval.

Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion. Motion passed.

B. Series 41, Procedural Rule, Health Sciences Service Program

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves revisions to Series 41, Health Sciences Service Program, to be filed with the Secretary of State for the 30-day public comment period and if no substantive comments are received, that the Commission extends its final approval.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

C. Series 63, Legislative Rule, Mental Health Loan Repayment Program

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves revisions to Series 63, Mental Health Loan Repayment Program, to be filed with the Secretary of State for a 30-day public comment period, and if no substantive comments are received, forward the rule to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability for approval and further legislative action.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

D. Series 64, Legislative Rule, Administrative Exemption

Commissioner Denova moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves revisions to Series 64, Administrative Exemption, to be filed with the Secretary of State for a 30-day public comment period, and if no substantive comments are received, forward the rule to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability for approval and further legislative action.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XV. Approval of Repeal of Commission Rules: Series 43, Series 48, Series 51

Mr. Jenkins explained the need to repeal the rules.

Commissioner Dailey moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the repeal of Series 43, Purchasing Efficiencies, Series 48, Research Trust Fund Program, and Series 51, Bookstores and Textbooks.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XVI. Approval of Presidential Compensation at Concord University

Mr. Jenkins presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the compensation contract for Dr. Bethany Meighen as President of Concord University as proposed by the institutional board of governors.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XVII. Approval of Presidential Compensation at Glenville State University

Mr. Jenkins presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Dailey moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the compensation contract for Dr. Mark Manchin as President of Glenville State University as proposed by the institutional board of governors.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XVIII. Approval of Presidential Compensation at West Liberty University

Mr. Jenkins presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Denova moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the compensation contract for Dr. Timothy Borchers as President of West Liberty University as proposed by the institutional board of governors.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XIX. Possible Executive Session under the Authority of West Virginia Code §6-9A-4 to Discuss Personnel Issues

A. Annual Chancellor's Evaluation

Vice Chairman Farrell entertained a motion to move into executive session. Commissioner Pitchford moved that the Higher Education Policy Commission enter executive session to discuss personnel issues related to the Chancellor's annual evaluation. Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XX. Additional Board Action and Comment

Vice Chairman Farrell entertained a motion to rise from executive session.

Commissioner Jackson moved that the Higher Education Policy Commission rise from executive session and resume the business meeting. Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Vice Chairman Farrell stated that no action was taken during the executive

session. He praised Chancellor Tucker for her leadership of the Commission.

XXI. Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Denova moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Michael J. Farrell, Chairman

E. Gail Pitchford, Secretary

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ITEM: West Virginia Higher Education Retirement Plan Update

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: Information Item

STAFF MEMBER: Patricia Humphries

BACKGROUND:

West Virginia Code requires the Commission -- on behalf of the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education (Council), institution governing boards, and itself -- to contract for and administer a retirement plan for their employees, known as the Higher Education Retirement Plan.

In total, 23 employer locations submit employee and employer contributions to the Higher Education Retirement Plan via wire transfer from three separate payroll systems. The Higher Education Retirement Plan holds combined assets of \$4.5 billion with 30,642 participants with balances. The program includes three plans:

- Qualified 401(a) defined contribution plan with a 6% mandatory participation requirement and 6% employer match.
- Voluntary participation 403(b) Supplemental Plan.
- Voluntary participation 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan.

The voluntary plans also offer after-tax ROTH options, and multiple options for age-based catch-up contributions.

The recordkeeper for the Higher Education Retirement Plan is Teachers Insurance Annuity Association (TIAA).

In 2023, the Commission awarded CapTrust the contract for investment advisory fiduciary services. In 2024, the relationship between the Commission, CapTrust and TIAA was expanded to allow CapTrust to serve as the fiduciary for the Qualified Default Investment Alternative (QDIA). The QDIA is the default investment option used when an employee participant does not, or may not, have the expertise to select their own investments for their retirement account. The QDIA provides a well-rounded investment strategy for the employee and offers a degree of protection from fiduciary liability for the employer.

The Retirement Committee of the Commission works with the teams from TIAA and CapTrust to administer the Higher Education Retirement Plan. Committee membership includes:

- Patricia Humphries, *Vice Chancellor for Human Resources*
- Matt Turner, *Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration*
- Misty Price, *Vice Chancellor for Finance and Facilities*
- Joseph Jenkins, *General Counsel*
- Jim Dailey, *Member of the Commission*
- Steve Roberts, *Chairman of the Council*

Mr. Michael Sanders, Principal and Financial Advisor with CapTrust will present an overview of key accomplishments since the engagement began in late 2023. A brief biography for Mr. Sanders is below:

Mike Sanders is one of the lead advisors for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. With over 20 years of experience in retirement plan consulting and client management, Mike specializes in helping plan sponsors manage risk and leverage technology to deliver optimal investment outcomes for participants. He partners with plan sponsors in all aspects of the due diligence process – analysis, plan design, compliance, regulatory, and process changes, to ensure their retirement programs are aligned with best practices and participant needs.

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ITEM: Approval of Vision 2030: West Virginia Science & Technology Plan

INSTITUTIONS: All

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Vision 2030: West Virginia Science & Technology Plan.

STAFF MEMBER: Janet Rorrer

BACKGROUND:

The West Virginia Science and Research Council, which also serves as West Virginia's National Science Foundation EPSCoR Steering Committee, updated the state's Science and Technology Strategic Plan with the help of stakeholders from academia, industry, state government, and the RTI International consulting group.

The *Vision 2030* goals aim to develop West Virginia's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) talent pipeline, increase the number and size of research and development-intensive and technology-based companies, expand the research enterprise, and catalyze more innovation and entrepreneurship activity. The set of proposed actions to advance these goals build on existing initiatives and collaborative efforts among higher education, industry, and government. A few are new and others re-establish state programs recognized for contributing to research capacity-building in the past. Each action is supported by a strong business case with metrics to track progress.

The revised plan, *Vision 2030: West Virginia Science & Technology*, may be found here:

<https://wvresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/WestVirginiaPlan-Vision2030.pdf>

West Virginia's five-year plan is fully supported by the West Virginia Science and Research Council which approved the plan on June 26, 2025 and includes members from West Virginia University, Marshall University, West Virginia State University, and Shepherd University, as well as representation from industry, education, and economic development. *Vision 2030* was developed in consultation with over 60 stakeholders representing the perspectives of West Virginia companies, higher education, and state government. *Vision 2030* articulates their shared vision of what West Virginia can accomplish by continuing to work together, as well as with new partners.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
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ITEM: Approval of Lancaster Bible College to Offer Courses in West Virginia

INSTITUTION: Lancaster Bible College

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Lancaster Bible College to offer college courses to students at Lodestar Mountain Inn beginning with the fall 2025 semester. This approval expires June 30, 2026, subject to renewal.

STAFF MEMBER: Chris Rasmussen

BACKGROUND:

The Commission's policy, Series 20, Legislative Rule, Initial Authorization of Degree-Granting Institutions, addresses accredited, out-of-state institutions seeking to locate in West Virginia. Section 7.3 states:

Any higher education institution having its principal place of operation outside West Virginia which holds regional or other appropriate accreditation and which desires to offer courses and/or degree programs at a physical location within West Virginia must be authorized by the Commission.

Lancaster Bible College (LBC), a private, non-profit institution located in Pennsylvania, requests authorization to offer college courses at Lodestar Mountain Inn in Pendleton County through a partnership with Wingfield Ministries, Inc. (WMI). Wingfield Ministries currently operates a "Gap Year" program at the site that does not award any college credit. The partnership between LBC and WMI intends to create a "Gap Year Education Program," whereby participants will be enrolled students of LBC and will earn credits towards a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies. The Gap Year Education Program will include nine courses totaling 27 credit-hours taught by LBC-reviewed and approved instructors; two courses will be in general education with the remainder in theological studies. Upon completion of the Gap Year, students may pursue completion of their degree at LBC's Pennsylvania campus or online.

This program is designed to enroll at least 15 and at most 50 students with the potential to admit more students upon written agreement between the parties. LBC will admit, enroll, and register students, store grades, process financial aid, and manage student accounts. LBC will also provide students with access to their Learning Management

System (Canvas), library resources, and student services. Wingfield Ministries, Inc. will employ an Academic Director to be the point of contact for LBC and manage all aspects of the program on location.

Lodestar Mountain Inn is formally recognized by LBC's accreditors as an "Other Instructional Site" (Middle States Commission on Higher Education) and as an "Extension Site" (Association for Biblical Higher Education). Lancaster Bible College is a member institution of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) and is authorized through NC-SARA to offer limited, in-person instruction at an interstate site until such time as Series 20 authorization is considered by the Commission.

Per the Commission's Series 20, Legislative Rule, Initial Authorization of Degree-Granting Institutions, the authorization of courses may be granted for a period of one year at a specified location. Staff recommend that the initial authorization of courses at Lodestar Mountain Inn by Lancaster Bible College expire on June 30, 2026, with full year authorization considered in subsequent renewals.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
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ITEM: Approval of Presidential Compensation

INSTITUTION: Fairmont State University

RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION: *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the compensation contract for Dr. Michael Davis as President of Fairmont State University as proposed by the institutional board of governors.

STAFF MEMBER: Joseph Jenkins

BACKGROUND:

Pursuant to W. Va. Code § 18B-1B-4(a)(15), the Commission must approve the total compensation package from all sources for presidents of institutions under its jurisdiction proposed by institutional governing boards.

At its meeting on August 27, 2025, the Fairmont State University Board of Governors (Board) approved the five-year contract amendment and change in compensation for President Michael Davis as set forth in your materials. The Board elected to increase the base annual compensation for the President from \$295,000.00 to \$310,000.00, an increase of approximately 5%; and the Foundation is paying a \$30,000.00 presidential retention incentive upon execution of the contract. In addition, the annual incentive payments were modified and increased as follows: a) recruitment and retention incentive increased from a maximum of \$20,000.00/year to \$25,000.00/year; b) fundraising incentive increased from a maximum of \$10,000.00/year to \$25,000.00/year; and c) a new incentive for reputation not to exceed \$12,500.00/year. The total annual incentives are capped at \$50,000.00/year, an increase from the prior cap of \$30,000.00/year. These increases are greater than the average percentage increase provided to staff and faculty, and are justified by the Board as follows:

- Recent, generally favorable formal presidential evaluation that inspired confidence in the President that he was meeting or exceeding the Board's expectations among the various evaluated measurements.
- President Davis is highly visible on campus and has brought stability in addition to excitement to the University.
- President Davis has prioritized maintaining relationships within and outside the campus community including key local, state and federal policymakers.
- Under the President's leadership, the University has seen improvement in a number of objective measures, including enrollment, advancement and athletics.

As an administratively exempt institution, this proposed contract comports with the requirements of code; therefore, it is recommended that the Commission approve the proposed compensation package as submitted.