

MINUTES

WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION

April 1, 2026

I. Call to Order

Chairman Michael Farrell convened a meeting of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) on April 1, 2026, at 9:00 a.m., in the David K. Hendrickson Conference Center, Building 2000 of the West Virginia Regional Technology Park, 2001 Union Carbide Drive, South Charleston, West Virginia, and by Zoom videoconference and conference call. The following Commission members participated: James Denova; James Dailey, Michael J. Farrell; Diana Lewis Jackson; Andrew A. Payne; E. Gail Pitchford, Michelle Blatt, Ex-Officio, and Steve Roberts, Ex-Officio. Other participants included university representatives, Chancellor Sarah Armstrong Tucker, and Commission staff.

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

II. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Payne moved to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2025, Commission meeting. Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

III. Chairman's Report

Chairman Farrell expressed his thanks to Governor Morrisey and state legislative leaders and recognized the efforts of Chancellor Tucker and Commission staff for a favorable legislative session.

IV. Chancellor's Report

Chancellor Tucker reflected on a busy legislative session and thanked Governor Morrisey and state legislators for fully funding the higher education funding formula and passing financial aid legislation. She also announced West Virginia's top-ten national ranking for FAFSA completion, which is an incredible accomplishment that reflects the diligent work of the Commission's financial aid staff.

V. Legislative Update

Mr. Joseph Jenkins, General Counsel, provided a detailed overview of finalized legislation that will have an impact on the Commission and the state's higher education institutions.

VI. Approval of Presidential Compensation

Mr. Jenkins presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Payne moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the compensation contract for Dr. Cameron B. Wesson as President of Shepherd University as proposed by the institutional board of governors.

Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VII. Approval of Fiscal Year 2027 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program

Mr. Brian Weingart, Senior Director of Financial Aid, presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program.

Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VIII. Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, and Summer Awards for the Promise Scholarship

Mr. Weingart presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed eligibility requirements, the annual award amount, and summer awards for the Promise Scholarship Program.

Commissioner Lewis Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

IX. Approval of Master of Public Health

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

Commissioner Lewis Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Concord University to offer the Master of Public Health program beginning with the

Fall 2026 academic term. This approval expires two years from the date of Commission approval if the program is not fully implemented.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

X. Approval of Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology

Dr. Rasmussen presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Payne moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Glensville State University to offer the Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology program beginning with the Fall 2026 academic term. This approval expires two years from the date of Commission approval if the program is not fully implemented.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XI. Approval of Annual Reauthorization of Private Institutions

Dr. Rasmussen presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Payne moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves annual reauthorization for American Public University, Appalachian Bible College, Bethany College, Catholic International University, Davis and Elkins College, Future Generations University, University of Charleston, Valley College, and West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Commissioner Lewis Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XII. Possible Executive Session Under the Authority of W. Va. Code § 6-9A-4 to Discuss Licensure of Salem University

A. Review of State Financial Aid Programs

Mr. Weingart provided a detailed report on the irregularities uncovered during Salem University's recent state financial aid compliance audit. The violations resulted in the prohibition of Salem University from participating in state financial aid programs, triggered additional review, and the currently-identified, misappropriated funds total of approximately \$500,000 owed to the Commission.

Representatives from Salem University were provided an opportunity to respond to the findings and provide an update on efforts to remediate the

problems identified by Commission staff. Those representatives were Paul Weber, President and CEO, Ginger Verble, Vice President of Finance, Justin Presz, Vice President of Student Success, and Dr. Roderick Johnson, Director of Financial Aid.

B. Approval of Provisional Reauthorization

Chairman Farrell entertained a motion to move to executive session.

Commissioner Lewis Jackson moved that the Higher Education Policy Commission move into executive session to discuss matters related to the licensure of Salem University. Commissioner Payne seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XIII. Additional Board Action and Comment

Chairman Farrell entertained a motion to rise from executive session.

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

Chairman Farrell stated that no action was taken during executive session. He proceeded to entertain a motion to act on the reauthorization of Salem University.

Commissioner Payne moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves provisional reauthorization of Salem University.

Commissioner Roberts seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XIV. Adjournment

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

Michael Joseph Farrell

Michael J. Farrell, Chairman

E. Gail Pitchford

E. Gail Pitchford, Secretary