

MINUTES

WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION

April 12, 2024

I. Call to Order

Chairman Andrew Payne convened a meeting of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) on April 12, 2024, 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 Zoom videoconference and conference call. The following Commission members participated: Michele Blatt, Ex-Officio, State Superintendent of Schools; Christina Cameron, Ex-Officio, Chair of the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education; James Denova; Michael J. Farrell; Diana Lewis Jackson; Andrew A. Payne; and E. Gail Pitchford. Other participants included university representatives, Chancellor Sarah Armstrong Tucker, and Commission staff.

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

II. Chairman's Report

Chairman Payne made brief remarks and thanked Chancellor Tucker and Commission staff for their support of students during the current challenges with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

III. Chancellor's Report

Chancellor Tucker provided an overview of legislative actions passed during the 2024 regular session. She also provided an update to the Commission regarding challenges surrounding the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Due to issues with the new form, she shared that FAFSA completion rates are down significantly both statewide and nationally from prior years. As of March 29, 2024, only 6,400 West Virginia high school seniors had started a FAFSA and 5,140 of those students had completed the application. This represents a 33.3 percent decline in applications for West Virginia high school seniors from this time last year. The decline in applications is not unique to West Virginia; nationally, there is a 27 percent decline in applications and 50 percent of completed applications have errors that must be corrected.

The Divisions of Student Affairs and Financial Aid have conducted 160 financial aid nights and FAFSA workshops so far this year to encourage students to apply.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Jackson moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2023 Commission meeting. Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

V. Presentation of the College-Going Rate of 2023 West Virginia Public High School Graduates

Dr. Zornitsa Georgieva, Senior Director of Research and Analysis, presented the report and described the current trends.

VI. Presentation of Appalachian Care Chronicles Podcast Project

Ms. Carolyn Canini, Director of Behavioral Health Programs, provided an overview of the first two seasons of the Appalachian Care Chronicles podcast.

VII. Approval of Updated Salary Schedule for the West Virginia Higher Education Compensation Management Program

Ms. Patricia Humphries, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the 2024 West Virginia Higher Education Employee Salary Schedule.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

VIII. Approval of Institution Capital Assessments for Fiscal Year 2025

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

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the institution capital assessments for Fiscal Year 2025 as shown in Table 2.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

IX. Approval of Transfer of Ownership of the Erma Byrd Center Allied Health Wing

Mr. Matt Turner, Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration, presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves transfer of ownership of the Erma Byrd Center Allied Health Wing in Beaver, West Virginia, to New River Community and Technical College.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

X. Approval of Fiscal Year 2025 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program

Ms. Tana Pendell, Director of State Financial Aid Programs, presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XI. Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, Extension of Deadline, and Summer Awards for the Promise Scholarship Program

Ms. Pendell presented an overview of the proposed changes.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

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

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XII. Approval of Master of Science in Criminal Justice

Dr. Corley Dennison, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, presented the new program requested by Glenville State University.

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the Master of Science in Criminal Justice program at Glenville State University for implementation in fall 2024. 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.

XIII. Approval of Annual Reauthorization of Four-Year Degree-Granting Private Institutions

Dr. Dennison presented the agenda item. Mr. David Hendrickson provided a brief update on behalf of Wheeling University.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

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

Further resolved, that Wheeling University be provisionally reauthorized.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XIV. Approval of Valley College to Continue to Operate in West Virginia

Dr. Dennison presented the request by Valley College.

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the request of Valley College to continue to operate in West Virginia as a degree-granting institution.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

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

- A. Annual Chancellor's Evaluation
- B. Approval of Chancellor's Contract

Executive session was not requested. Mr. Turner presented the agenda items for consideration.

Commissioner Pitchford moved approval of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Dr. Sarah Armstrong Tucker's contract as Chancellor for a three-year term

beginning July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027.

Commissioner Jackson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

XVI. Additional Board Action and Comment.

There was no further discussion.

XVII. Adjournment

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

Andrew Payne

Andrew A. Payne, Chairman

Diana Lewis Jackson

Diana Lewis Jackson, Secretary