

**WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION**

**February 14, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. | [Zoom Video Conference](#)**

**By Phone: 1-646-558-8656 and enter meeting ID 891 4796 6870**

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Chairman’s Report**
- III. Chancellor’s Report**
- IV. Update from Advisory Council of Classified Employees**
- V. Approval of Minutes.....2**
- VI. Update from the Division of Student Affairs.....5**
- VII. Update on the West Virginia Nursing Workforce Expansion Program.....6**
- VIII. Update on Campus Mental Health Impact Grants.....9**
- IX. Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, and Summer Awards for the Promise Scholarship Program.....11**
- X. Approval of Fiscal Year 2026 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program .....13**
- XI. Approval of Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity.....14**
- XII. Approval of Annual Reauthorization of Four-Year Degree-Granting Private Institutions.....15**
- XIII. Additional Board Action and Comment**
- XIV. Adjournment**

## **DRAFT MINUTES**

### **WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION**

**December 13, 2024**

#### **I. Call to Order**

Chairman Andrew A. Payne convened a meeting of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission on December 13, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., by Zoom video and teleconference. The following Commission members participated: Christina Cameron, Ex-Officio; James W. Dailey; James Denova; Michael J. Farrell; Diane Lewis Jackson; Andrew A. Payne, and E. Gail Pitchford. Absent was Michele Blatt, Ex-Officio. Other participants included university representatives, Chancellor Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Higher Education Policy Commission staff, and others.

Chairman Payne secured a quorum.

#### **II. Chairman's Report**

Chairman Payne welcomed all participants to the meeting. He thanked Dr. Nemitz, President of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, for agreeing to host the Commission; however, due to weather, the meeting was held by Zoom.

#### **III. Chancellor's Report**

Chancellor Tucker also thanked Dr. Nemitz and expressed regret that the Commission was not able to meet in person as originally intended.

She shared an update about the newly-convened Interagency College-Going Rate Workgroup. The workgroup is a collaboration between the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education, and the Commission, and is focused on four key areas to address the state's low college-going rate.

#### **IV. Annual Update from Advisory Council of Students**

Luke Sweat, Chair of the Advisory Council of Students, presented to the Commission. He shared the group's legislative priority, a grant program designed to provide physical support to students in the form of food, medical, and hygiene items.

#### **V. Approval of Minutes**

Commissioner Cameron moved to approve the minutes of the September 20, 2024 Commission meeting. Commissioner Farrell seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**VI. Presentation of 2024 Health Sciences and Rural Health Report**

Ms. Jordyn Reed, Administrator, presented the agenda item.

**VII. Report on Fall 2024 Enrollment**

Dr. Zorrie Georgieva, Senior Director of Research, presented the report.

**VIII. Presentation of 2024 Financial Aid Comprehensive Report**

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

**IX. Presentation of Fiscal Year 2024 Consolidated Audit**

Ms. Misty Price, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Facilities, introduced the agenda item. Christina Bowman from CliftonLarsonAllen presented the audit findings.

Commissioner Jackson moved approval of the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission accepts the audited financial report for the Higher Education Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Commissioner Pitchford seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**X. Approval to Offer Master's Degree Programs**

Dr. Corley Dennison, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, presented the agenda item.

Commissioner Cameron moved approval of the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves Davis & Elkins College to begin offering master's degree programs with the implementation of the Master of Science in Sport Management.

Commissioner Denova seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**XI. Approval of Presidential Compensation**

Ms. Kristin Boggs, General Counsel, 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. Darrin Martin as President of Bluefield State

University as proposed by the institutional board of governors.

Commissioner Cameron seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**XII. Additional Board Action and Comment**

There was no additional action or comment by the board.

**XIII. Adjournment**

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

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Andrew A. Payne, Chairman

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Diana Lewis Jackson, Secretary

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of February 14, 2025**

**ITEM:** Update from the Division of Student Affairs

**INSTITUTIONS:** All

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:** Information Item

**STAFF MEMBER:** J.R. Luyster

**BACKGROUND:**

The presentation from the Division of Student Affairs will provide updates on several new outreach initiatives and the expansion of existing ones.

- The College for West Virginia (CRWV) web portal was recently redesigned to make college, career, and financial aid planning easier for students and educators. In addition to the new “My Climb Guides,” students and families can now access the Level All platform, which offers a wide range of detailed short-form articles and videos focused on topics such as financial literacy, college success, and career exploration.
- The new Higher Education Action and Impact Awards will recognize individuals, institutions, and organizations for their significant contributions to college and career readiness efforts, resulting in increased student access and success across West Virginia.
- WV GEAR UP’s 21st Century Scholars program has expanded statewide, receiving positive feedback from students and educators. To be recognized as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholar at graduation, high school seniors must complete three milestones, designed to propel them toward postsecondary success.
- The CFV Champions of College Access and Success awards program is also expanding to more schools, ranging from elementary to collegiate levels.
- In collaboration with Texas Instruments, technology bundles and professional development have been provided to 42 math and science educators in WV GEAR UP schools.
- West Virginia FAFSA Day, February 6, saw more than 50 locations across the state simultaneously coordinate FAFSA completion workshops.
- West Virginia Upward Bound students attended the STEAM Symposium in Orlando, visited BridgeValley CTC and Marshall University, and participated in a TRIO STEAM Conference.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of February 14, 2025**

**ITEM:** Update on the West Virginia Nursing Workforce Expansion Program

**INSTITUTIONS:** All

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:** Information Item

**STAFF MEMBER:** Jordyn Reed

**BACKGROUND:**

In December 2021, former Governor Jim Justice committed \$48 million to aggressively address West Virginia’s nursing workforce shortage through a multi-pronged plan to train, attract, and retain nurses. The purpose of this plan was not to fund short-term fixes to nursing workforce issues, but to instead seed initiatives that would have a long-lasting impact on the nursing workforce and equip West Virginia to care for its citizens.

**Year 1 (2022)**

Of the \$48 million utilized in the first year of the program through CARES Act funds, \$24 million was dedicated to expanding capacity statewide to train more nurses. Through a Request for Applications process, \$6.3 million was awarded to three programs to develop new program offerings:

- BridgeValley Community College – new LPN program
- Concord University – new BSN and BA/BS to BSN programs
- Glenville State University – joint BSN program offered in cooperation with Marshall University

The remaining \$19.8 million was awarded to pre-licensure LPN and RN programs to expand their enrollment and encourage programs to find new ways to shorten the time it takes to finish educational training and gain licensure. The overall goal of this investment in programs is to increase the number of new nurses graduating from West Virginia nursing programs.

**Year 2 (2023)**

The Legislature provided state funding to continue the expansion program. Approximately \$16 million was awarded to 24 pre-licensure LPN and RN programs across the state.

During the second year of this program:

- A 26.2 percent increase in available seats in pre-licensure nursing programs.
- A 24.2 percent increase in the number of filled seats in pre-licensure nursing programs.
- From 2022 to 2023, there was a nearly 15 percent increase in the number of registered nursing students in public nursing programs graduating with associates degrees.
- The total number of nursing graduates at all degree levels graduating increased by 15 percent over the past decade.

### **Year 3 (2024)**

Additional state funding was granted during the 2024 Second Special Session of the West Virginia Legislature in October 2024. A Request for Applications was released, and grants recently began at the end of January 2025. A total of twenty-four schools are receiving about \$15 million during this round, continuing the funding of new and innovative ways to meet the goals of this program. Some innovations include:

- BridgeValley Community and Technical College has increased their program offerings, including a Workforce Initiative for Nurses Academy that allows high school students to attend an accelerated program to complete the first year of an ASN program during high school.
- Fairmont State University is creating boot camps for prospective nursing students interested in their LPN to RN program to introduce them to new theories and real-life clinical components, academic preparation, and other tools needed to help students succeed within their nursing program.
- Marshall University has introduced a remediation program to provide support to nursing students at risk and ensure their success within the program. The remediation course is online and led by a remediation specialist who meets with students individually to work on study skills, learning style, time management, test taking strategies, note-taking, and other needed interventions.
- New River Community and Technical College has created a high school LPN program that allows high school students to begin the didactic portions of their LPN program through a partnership with Nicholas County schools.
- St. Mary's School of Nursing has shortened the time to licensure by adding an accelerated option for students to complete a summer term and graduate from the program a semester earlier than they normally would.
- West Liberty University is developing a peer-to-peer mentoring program to help foster connections between different cohorts of students and help with retention and successful completion of their nursing programs.

## **West Virginia Nursing Scholarship Program**

In addition to the program expansion, funding has also been allocated to the West Virginia Nursing Scholarship Program. This program provides scholarships to LPN, RN, and graduate level nursing students in exchange for completing service obligations in West Virginia. An analysis of program participants since 2016 found that 88 percent of participants maintained an active West Virginia nursing license after completing the service obligation.

<b>AWARD YEAR</b>	<b># APPLICATIONS</b>	<b># INDIVIDUALS AWARDED</b>	<b>TOTAL VALUE OF AWARDS</b>
2021-2022*	588	211	\$378,350
2022-2023	693	295	\$1,244,750
2023-2024	842	344	\$1,351,500
2024-2025**	911	341**	\$1,467,054**

*\*The 2021-2022 award year was the year before additional funding from the West Virginia Nursing Workforce Program was received. Per term award amounts were less than statutory maximums allowed in West Virginia State Code.*

*\*\*The current award year is still underway and there are 142 additional students who will become eligible later during the award year. Both the number of individuals awarded and the total value of awards are not finalized.*



**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of February 14, 2025**

**ITEM:** Update on Campus Mental Health Impact Grants

**INSTITUTIONS:** All

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:** Information Item

**STAFF MEMBER:** Candace Layne

**BACKGROUND:**

National and state assessments show that West Virginia has behavioral health workforce shortages and mental health needs among the college student population.

In 2023, the Commission's Division of Health Sciences was awarded \$700,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor through Congressionally Directed Spending secured by Senator Manchin and Senator Capito's offices to address workforce shortages. The Commission also received matching state funds to support the growth of the state's workforce through supporting student mental health at West Virginia's 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities.

With these funds, the Division of Health Sciences expanded existing campus mental health and workforce programs through institutional grants beginning in 2024. As the need for these programs persists, the Division continues to seek funding to provide additional grants.

The Division's current work through the West Virginia Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative and Campus Impact Grants is focused on:

- Providing statewide coordination for **behavioral health workforce growth** by convening industry and education stakeholders, synthesizing workforce data and programming resources, and disseminating resources and analysis to stakeholders and pipeline programs.
- Supporting **student mental health** at West Virginia's 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities through coordination and support of statewide wellness initiatives and campus grants to grow promising practices and evidence-based programs.

## **Highlights of the presentation**

- Review of Department of Labor funds to strengthen and grow the behavioral health workforce
- Review of Campus Mental Health Grants and Campus Impact Grants
- AI Technology in counselor education
- Suicide intervention and postvention training and resources
- Mental health training opportunities

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of February 14, 2025**

**ITEM:** Approval of Eligibility Requirements, Annual Award Amount, and Summer Awards for the Promise Scholarship Program

**INSTITUTIONS:** All

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

**STAFF MEMBER:** Brian Weingart

**BACKGROUND:**

The Promise Scholarship is a merit-based financial aid program for West Virginia residents. Students who achieve certain academic goals are eligible to receive annual awards to help offset the cost of tuition and mandatory fees at public or independent institutions in West Virginia.

**Eligibility Requirements**

The current minimum scholarship eligibility requirements for high school and homeschooled applicants require a 3.00 core and overall high school grade point average (GPA) and a 21 ACT composite score with a 19 in each of the four subject areas (English, mathematics, reading, and science), or, a 1080 SAT combined score with a 510 score in evidenced based reading and writing and a 510 score in mathematics.

Students who attend an out-of-state high school but reside in West Virginia must meet the academic eligibility criteria above, and the high school must verify that the student commuted on a daily basis from West Virginia the entire time the student attended the out-of-state high school.

**Test Score Requirement**

Staff recommends maintaining the minimum test score requirement for a student to receive Promise for the first time for the Class of 2026.

## **Superscore**

Staff recommends allowing students to superscore to achieve the minimum standardized scores necessary to qualify for the Promise Scholarship. This allows a student to take subscores from different test administrations to get an overall score that may be higher than what they scored on any individual test. This provision would apply to the Class of 2026.

## **Annual Award Amount**

Staff proposes maintaining the award level for the 2025-26 academic year at the lesser of tuition and mandatory fees, or \$5,500 annually.

## **Summer Awards**

The Promise Scholarship Program provides summer school awards for eligible students. Student acceptance of a summer award counts toward the maximum eight semesters of eligibility with priority given to students who can utilize the summer term to graduate by year's end. Staff proposes to continue summer Promise awards based upon available funding for Summer 2025.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Recipients</b>	<b>Total Summer Awards</b>
2024	160	\$343,239
2023	167	\$337,026
2022	114	\$227,033
2021	136	\$269,717
2020	152	\$312,473

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of February 14, 2025**

**ITEM:** Approval of Fiscal Year 2026 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program

**INSTITUTIONS:** All

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:** *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Distribution Plan for the West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program.

**STAFF MEMBER:** Brian Weingart

**BACKGROUND:**

The West Virginia Higher Education Grant Program, the state's long-standing need-based financial aid program, provides opportunities for full-time, undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need to pursue a postsecondary education at qualified institutions.

Series 42, the legislative rule that regulates the program, provide staff with policy latitude to determine award distribution frameworks.

**Revenue**

The Higher Education Grant Program receives funding from general revenue and carry forward balances. Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 funding, not including carry forward, should total just over \$40.6 million.

The Higher Education Student Financial Aid Advisory Board (SFAAB) proposes the distribution plan for FY 2026: setting the maximum award amount at \$3,400 for eligible institutions in West Virginia. The SFAAB recommends maintaining one award level and eligibility for students with a Student Aid Index (SAI) up to 13,000.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of February 14, 2025**

**ITEM:** Approval of Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity

**INSTITUTION:** West Virginia State University

**RECOMMENDED RESOLUTION:** *Resolved*, That the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission approves the Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity program at West Virginia State University for implementation in fall 2025.

**STAFF MEMBER:** Corley Dennison

**BACKGROUND:**

West Virginia State University proposes to offer a bachelor's degree in Cybersecurity. The program will consist of 120 credit hours with options for two concentrations: a) Cybersecurity and b) Agriculture Cybersecurity. This program plans to adopt the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education curricular framework as developed by the Department of Homeland Security in partnership with industry and academia.

The full program proposal may be found here:

<https://www.wvhepc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Cybersecurity-degree-proposal-12.2024-to-HEPC.pdf>

The University intends to offer students the opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications and badges (micro-credentials) to enhance employability in the cybersecurity workforce. West Virginia State University has started the IBM Freshmen Initiative by requiring every student in the freshmen experience class to take at least one of three foundational badge courses: cybersecurity, AI or data science. The institution plans to embed IBM resources throughout the program curriculum to provide direct or supplemental education. The IBM resources are provided at no cost to students.

The program is to be supported by the University's Cybersecurity Clinic, established through a \$1 million grant from Google. The clinic allows students to have real world experience in conducting cyber-attack vulnerability assessments.

There are three other programs in cybersecurity at West Virginia's public four-year institutions. However, job demand for cybersecurity positions is extremely high and the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that demand should remain high through the remainder of the decade.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
Meeting of February 14, 2025**

**ITEM:** Approval of Annual Reauthorization of Four-Year Degree-Granting Private Institutions

**INSTITUTIONS:** Appalachian Bible College, Bethany College, Catholic International University, Davis and Elkins College, Future Generations University, University of Charleston, Valley College, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Wheeling University, American Public University, Salem University, and Strayer University

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

**STAFF MEMBER:** Beez Schell

**BACKGROUND:**

West Virginia Code §18B-4-7 gives the Commission the authority to annually reauthorize degree-granting institutions in West Virginia offering baccalaureate degrees and higher. In accordance with the Legislative rule implementing this statutory authority, institutions are required to provide all information “necessary to assess the performance of the institution and to determine whether the institution continues to meet the minimum standards for conferring degrees.”

Commission staff recommend full reauthorization for all institutions listed above.