

Advisory Council of Faculty Report July 27, 2007 LOCEA Interims

The House and Senate joint Education Committee met from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m., in the Senate Finance Committee Room on July 27. Two reports of interest were given by Chancellors Skidmore and Noland, as well as the Annual Purchasing Performance report on higher education by state auditor Gail Higgins (copy available).

- I. **Chancellor Skidmore's Report:** Chancellor Skidmore presented **5 Goals for the Delivery of Comprehensive Community and Technical College Education:** Access to Affordable CTC Education; High Quality Graduates; High Quality Workforce Development Programs; Collaboration with Other Providers of Education and Training Programs; Collaboration with the Public Schools. Specific sub-goals this year include the following:
 - A. Tuition strategies;
 - B. On-line learning development;
 - C. Strategies to develop workforce needs, particularly in technology;
 - D. Retention and graduation strategies;
 - E. Development program strategies, including reading placement component;
 - F. Collaboration with labor union strategies;
 - G. College transition program expansion.

- II. **Chancellor Noland's Report, "Profiles and Trends in WV Higher Education: A Focus on Affordability"**

Chancellor Noland expressed his gratitude that the Legislature has funded a total of 12 HEPC Financial Programs (including Grant Programs, \$33,000,000; PROMISE Scholarships, \$40,800,000; and Adult Part-Time Student HEAPS Grants, \$5,002,000). He lamented, however, the declining legislative financial support of higher education in general, noting only Louisiana below West Virginia in terms of state support for higher education institutions; he likewise stressed the continued rise in student fees and tuition to offset legislative support. The upshot of this falling legislative support is that **students are going deeper into debt in order to pay for four years of college education.**

Dr. Noland and presenters from his office noted a number of **needed changes in the state financial aid programs:**

- A. More promotion of the need-based awards;
- B. More focus on non-traditional students, particularly in simplifying the application process, which is problematic since these students are not in the "information loop" that high school students have access to (specifically, he wants to eliminate the common state application form);
- C. A scaled or tiered award system that is comparable with the Pell system;
- D. Revising the March 1 deadline for non-traditional student application since these students do not make the decision to attend college as early as high school students. Dr. Noland made the point that non-traditional students are more likely to remain in the state, as their roots are more firmly established—thus the need for our attention to this group.

Dr. Noland distributed a variety of updated statistics and information—the most eye-catching was the chart on **appropriations vs. tuition and fee rise**. He praised the legislature for seeing to the needs of students at both ends of the academic spectrum in terms of PROMISE and needs-based grants. For example, the PROMISE program has risen from 10.2 million when it began a few years ago to over 40 million, while at the same time the over-all ACT requirement has risen to 22. West Virginia leads the country in this area.

In the questioning period, **Del. Doyle** asked about the validity of complaining about falling state appropriations when direct grants and scholarships to students had risen (in other words, the Legislature has shifted funding somewhat, from directly to the institutions to the students, thus placing the onus on institutions to compete for student numbers).