



August 23, 2012

The Honorable Earl Ray Tomblin, Governor  
State of West Virginia  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East  
Charleston, West Virginia 25305

Dear Governor Tomblin:

The WV Advisory Council of Faculty, representing 7,790 Higher Education full-time and part-time faculty across the state, support the Higher Education Policy Commission's request for "exemption for the state's higher education system from the proposed Fiscal Year 2014 budget reduction."

West Virginia Higher Education Faculty supported the remarkable accomplishments for Higher Education under your leadership, including addressing the OPEB liability issue. We are immensely appreciative and understand the long-term significance of this accomplishment. We likewise are dedicating our energy and resources to addressing issues of student retention, as well as curricular innovation and updating. Our shared goal is to increase the numbers of college and university graduates so that West Virginia will have a more competitive work force. We are also involved with efforts to interface public and higher education in order to create a seamless and more success-oriented K-20 learning experience for all of our students in West Virginia. All of these efforts require the hard work and dedication of a faculty that has not had a significant salary increase from the Legislature in several years and each year falls further behind our SREB colleagues in average salary.

We know that you, more than perhaps any other official or legislator in the State, understand the connection between Higher Education and an economically viable workforce. We likewise know that you are aware that only 17% of WV students enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade will earn a two- or four-year college degree within ten years—while at the same time, by 2018, 49% of the jobs in WV will require education and/or training beyond high school. Closing this gap is an extraordinary challenge that can only be accomplished through the State's continued financial support of all our colleges and universities.

The West Virginia Advisory Council of Faculty would welcome the opportunity to speak with you about these important challenges in West Virginia, which we can accomplish only with your leadership during this time.

Sincerely,

Dr. S. Bailey Shurbutt, Chair  
Advisory Council of Faculty  
<http://www.wvacf.org/wvacf/home.aspx>