

# **Rationale for Salary Raise**

## **West Virginia Higher Education Faculty**

### **Special Legislative Session, 2005**

#### **Preface**

Most Higher Education Faculty in the State have received no pay raise for the past three years, while all other State employees have at least reaped the benefit of Annual Experience Incremental Pay. The quality of student baccalaureate education in West Virginia is primarily dependent upon the quality of the faculty who develop the programs, oversee accreditation, update curricula, as well as teach, advise, encourage and mentor students. West Virginia Higher Education has reached a crucial turning point, an essential "tipping point," where State funding of a salary raise is absolutely necessary.

#### **Rationale**

- 1) WV Higher Education faculty average salary ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in our sixteen-state SREB region, and faculty are the only class of state employees that do not receive an annual increment.
- 2) As a result of Higher Education budget cuts (over \$40.1 million during 2001-2004) and no legislated salary increases for faculty, many institutions have lost substantial numbers of faculty over the past two years. For example, Shepherd University has lost a quarter of its faculty who have moved on to better, higher-paying positions in other states.
- 3) Faced with mandated budget cuts and fearful of the staffing crisis looming ominously, a few institutions have taken it upon themselves to issue small salary increases on the basis of raising FTEs and student tuition. However, these salary raises have been placed directly on the backs of our students who can ill afford the rising cost of Higher Education. The State should bear the fiscal responsibility of providing access to a better economic life through Higher Education for its population.
- 4) Because of the lack of Higher Education Funding for the past three years, the serious problem of "salary inversion" has occurred at most institutions. Thus senior faculty have actually fallen behind newly-hired faculty in terms of compensation. State salary raises should address the dilemma of "salary inversion" immediately before institutions lose more crucial, experienced faculty.
- 5) With the extraordinary transition about to commence in Higher Education as the "Baby-Boomer" generation of faculty retire, the job market across the country will take a dramatic turn, making it all the more difficult to attract and retain qualified faculty into a State noted for static faculty salaries.

#### **Summary**

Higher Education is the crucial component as the population of West Virginia prepares to "retool" in this complex economic global environment. Our students deserve a quality Higher Education that will prepare them to meet the challenges of the current economic situation, and the attraction and retention of quality Higher Education teachers will make that possible.

#### **Relevance to AEI Issue (Annual Experience Increment)**

The position of the Advisory Council of Faculty and its constituency is that the salary issue and the AEI issue are two separate matters and that we should not have to make a choice between the two, since all other State employees arguing for salary increases at the special session already receive the AEI. The Incremental Pay Issue is purely a matter of equity.