

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18B-1C-1

§18B-1C-1. Legislative findings and intent.

(a) The Legislature recognizes that:

(1) West Virginia University Institute of Technology is a vital part of higher education in West Virginia and has a rich and distinguished history of more than one hundred and twenty years of providing important educational opportunities that needs to continue;

(2) The engineering program at West Virginia University Institute of Technology plays a significant role in the continued success of the students at the institution and of the state as a whole;

(3) Facilities at West Virginia University Institute of Technology in Montgomery are in greater disrepair and in greater need of overall capital investment than are facilities at West Virginia University;

(4) In 2009, the Legislative Auditor completed a report stating that the facilities in Montgomery included a number of aging buildings with significant structural, heating, and cooling problems, and that the location of the West Virginia University Institute of Technology offered few enhancements to the quality of student life;

(5) In 2011, the Legislature commissioned a study and report seeking to revitalize the West Virginia University Institute of Technology, and the report concluded that the West Virginia Institute of Technology needed to increase its enrollment from 1,100 to 1,800 and concluded that unless the State of West Virginia, West Virginia University, or other sources could commit to "a \$5 million to \$7 million investment for each of the next five years, the revitalization legislation of 2011 will be seen merely as an exercise in futility;"

(6) West Virginia University has for many years deployed revenues generated from its campus in Morgantown to subsidize the operations and capital improvements needed for its campus in Montgomery;

(7) Although the state, the Higher Education Policy Commission, and West Virginia University have made investments in the operations and facilities of the West Virginia University Institute of Technology in Montgomery, the facilities in Montgomery need significant additional capital investment to be suitable to attract a sufficient number of students seeking a world-class, four-year higher education;

(8) The state lacks sufficient resources to address the issues facing the facilities and enrollment issues in Montgomery, and in recent years has reduced appropriations for all institutions of higher education;

(9) In 2014, Mountain State University decided to sell its assets, including its campus in

Beckley, West Virginia and West Virginia University was offered the opportunity to negotiate for and ultimately purchased the campus in Beckley, West Virginia in the summer of 2015;

(10) To help ensure the continued viability and vitality of West Virginia University Institute of Technology, West Virginia University has proposed relocating the institution to the newly-acquired campus in Beckley, West Virginia;

(11) The Higher Education Policy Commission has approved a proposal by West Virginia University and the West Virginia University Institute of Technology to offer courses on the Beckley Campus;

(12) West Virginia University, the West Virginia University Institute of Technology, Bluefield State College, and Concord University have entered into an agreement to collaborate as equal partners to maximize course offerings, reduce program duplication, and better serve the students of southeastern West Virginia.

(13) West Virginia University has offered economic, community development, and related assistance to the City of Montgomery, City of Smithers, the County Commission of Kanawha County, and the County Commission of Fayette County. (14) Collaboration between the engineering and engineering technology programs of West Virginia University Institute of Technology, West Virginia University, Marshall University, Bluefield State College and other private partners as appropriate would:

(A) Lead to a greater understanding and knowledge of engineering research;

(B) Lead to greater opportunities for students to engage in research; and

(C) Result in greater opportunities for participating students to find gainful employment in future research or to continue graduate level research and study.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature that collaboration: (1) occur among West Virginia University Institute of Technology, West Virginia University, Marshall University, Concord University, Bluefield State College, and appropriate public and private entities to provide significant education opportunities to students in a manner that optimizes courses and program offerings, reduces and minimizes program duplication, and creates efficiencies in program delivery and expenses while at the same time respecting the value and independence and accreditation requirements separately of Concord University, Bluefield State College, West Virginia Institute of Technology, and West Virginia University; and (2) among West Virginia University Institute of Technology, West Virginia University, the County Commission of Kanawha County, the County Commission of Fayette County, the City of Smithers, and the City of Montgomery, should it elect to do so.

(c) It is specifically the intent of the Legislature that:

(1) The baccalaureate engineering program offered at the West Virginia University Institute of Technology be and remain a permanent component of its curriculum;

(2) Collaboration in engineering and other appropriate programs shall occur among West Virginia University Institute of Technology, West Virginia University, Marshall University, Concord University, Bluefield State College and the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine and appropriate private entities; and

(3) The West Virginia University Board of Governors continue to monitor and take appropriate steps necessary to address faculty salary levels. In considering the issue of faculty salary levels, the board may consider the unique mission of the division and the performance expectations for faculty in meeting the goals of the institution.