

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §18b-18A-1

§18B-18A-1. Legislative findings; purpose; and intent.

(a) The Legislature finds that the continued expansion of the nation's economy is dependent upon the ability of its institutions of higher education to increase the quality, quantity and productivity of its citizens who are engaged in scientific and technical fields of study. Failure of the United States to compete in these areas may lead to lower standards of living, dependence upon foreign intellectual capital and international insecurity. The economic future of West Virginia is equally dependent upon the ability of Marshall University and West Virginia University, the state's two doctoral-granting, public research universities, as well as its other higher education institutions to promote, educate and train researchers and research support staff in these diverse fields of study.

The Legislature further finds that a recent emphasis on the creation of innovative curricula and the receipt of significant private donations by Marshall University and West Virginia University has led to major expansions in certain areas of study, including energy, national security technology, environmental sciences, health and biomedical sciences, biometrics, biotechnology and nanotechnology. Despite these expansions, the additional investment of both private donations and state moneys is critical to recruiting world-class scientists, researchers, research staff, technicians and professional degree graduates, as well as providing funding for laboratories and scientific equipment.

(b) The purpose of the Legislature in enacting this article is to establish a state fund to be administered by the Higher Education Policy Commission to address the findings outlined in subsection (a) of this section. The fund will make public moneys available to the state's two doctoral-granting public research universities, Marshall University and West Virginia University, and a state land grant higher education institution, West Virginia State University, to match qualified private donations and qualified private donation pledges; thereby creating an incentive for donors to support certain priority areas of study consistent with each participating institution's long-range strategic plan for research. Creation of this fund promotes strategic private donations targeted to specific areas of research and creates a sustainable source of funding for research initiatives that are critical to achieving long-term goals including, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) Research-based economic development and economic diversification; and
- (2) Increased potential for patenting, licensing and related technology transfer and commercialization of scientific and technological research in the state.