

## WEST VIRGINIA SCIENCE AND RESEARCH COUNCIL

### March 19, 2025

A meeting of the West Virginia Science and Research Council was held on March 19 at 1:30 p.m. at the headquarters of the Higher Education Policy Commission in So. Charleston, WV, and via Zoom. Attendance was as follows:

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:
Chancellor Sarah Tucker Dr. Jack Dever Dr. Jason Best Dr. Micheal Fultz Dr. John Maher Dr. Brandon Henderson Dr. Fred King Dr. Juliana Serafin Dr. Erika Klose (for Superintendent Michelle Blatt) Dr. Melanie Page Dr. Sheena Murphy Dr. Ming Lei	Dr. Janet Rorrer (HEPC) Dr. Heather Arnett (HEPC) Angela Sundstrom (HEPC) Tara Taylor (HEPC) Jennifer Ozawa (RTI) Dr. Sally Hodder (WV IDEA) Kelsey Staggers (for Cabinet Secretary of WV Dept. of Commerce) Dr. Kevin DiGregorio Dr. Suzanne Strait

#### MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rachel Roberts  
Dr. Michael Norton  
Dr. Maura McLaughlin

#### CALL TO ORDER

After declaring a quorum was present, Dr. Tucker called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Chancellor Tucker)

A motion to approve the minutes from the prior meeting on December 10, 2024, was made (Best) and seconded (Dever); the motion carried.

#### HEPC STaR Update (Janet Rorrer)

Janet is serving as interim senior director. The position is posted, and efforts are moving forward.

Our first IAB meeting has been set for April 16. Members will be working to improve STEM pipeline development efforts and connecting students to internships. Members include Michael Seminerio of Abbvie; Byran Labombard of Think of it Innovations, LLC; John Efromson, Ramona Optics; Maggie Scully and Victoria Brun from the NIH Partnership Development Office.

E-CORE and E-RISE will now be in the forefront. Tack I will be phased out and YEAR 3 begins June 1, 2025. Solicitation has been updated to include 8 million dollars for a 4-year cycle that can be renewed once for a total of 8 years. CO-PIs can officially apply this go round – E-CORE July 15, 2025, and E-RISE August 12, 2025. STaR is very interested in keeping in the loop for these moving forward.

The EPSCoR annual report is due now and will be submitted in the next few days.

Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol is March 25, 2025. From 9 – 11am will be the poster session and a reception in the culture center will begin at 11 AM. Thank you to Michael Fultz who is always an integral part in making this happen each year. STaR will be present, and we are a proud sponsor.

#### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PLANNING** (Jennifer Ozawa, RTI)

Jennifer Ozawa of RTI presented on Vision 20/30 and findings after interviews conducted with industry and venture stakeholders. More interviews to be conducted included those in administration, faculty, and legislation. Jennifer will conclude interviews in the month of April. Jennifer's presentation will be provided to all board members and will be available upon request to others participating in the meeting.

Highlights of the industry interviews revealed WV is a business-friendly state, lower staff turnover, and a can-do attitude. Manufacturing in WV is hard overall due to mountains topography. These leaders stated if WV attempted to build more amenities, it would help overall to bring people in. Another point mentioned to help our state is to "stay out of the headlines and remain politically neutral."

Discussions for this presentation included many SWOT analyses highlighting the challenges industry/manufacturing entities face when coming to WV and the knowledge of the student body entering this area of the workforce. A notable shift is being made from industry/manufacturing to health and health care products in both career availability and higher education enrollment. Dual enrollment options will hopefully be discussed with colleges and universities that will increase options in the STEM field for high school students.

#### **FIRST2 NETWORK UPDATE** (Dr. Heather Arnett)

Heather Arnett highlighted for anyone new that First2 is a grass roots program to connect institutions, industries, and students across WV and now KY, to work on recruitment and retention in STEM. At the beginning of February, FIRST2 took students to legislature. The kids were trained on how to feel confident on how to advocate and answer questions independently. Students were there from 9-5, attended and Education committee meeting and spoke with about 18 members of the legislature.

New Grant Submission "Sustainable Training for Employment Preparation in West Virginia (STEP-WV) initiative" EDA Grant has been submitted. It will provide \$17,000 each year to continue work and add an element connected to the workforce.

The West Virginia Academy of Sciences 99th Annual Meeting will be held April 5 at Shepherd University.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE** (Angela Sundstrom)

Finalizing agreement for video series which will include two submissions – one for Track I and STEM speaker series. Partnering with student affairs and gear up to host the Bug Cheeks for the spring STEM speaker series that will be at the Charleston Area Civic Center where they will be giving several presentations.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

A date for the next meeting was not chosen. A motion to adjourn the meeting (Fultz) was made and seconded (Best). The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.

#### **ADDITIONAL NEEDS OF ORDER:**

No additional needs