

UNDER the DOME



DECEMBER 11, 2017

In Review

This issue of Under the Dome provides a review of recent Legislative Interim Meetings, updates on the 2018 budget and issues under consideration that affect WVU and higher education.

The Budget

During November interims, Revenue Secretary Dave Hardy announced that, for the first time in three years, there would be no need for mid-year budget cuts by State agencies. Tax collections are off by just \$8 million for the first four months of the fiscal year. Comparatively, at this time last year, the estimates were behind by \$87 million.

While the trends are positive, the State Budget Office is still concerned about a potential revenue gap next year, as sales tax revenues are off estimates by more than \$17 million. Deputy Secretary Mark Muchow attributes this to consumers spending more on services than goods, particularly services related to healthcare.

The severance tax, which is collected on coal and natural gas, is below estimates but continues to outperform last year's collections – up by 37 percent. However, the price for natural gas continues to fall as compared to national averages.

To review the latest budget report and predictions by the West Virginia Department of Revenue and the State Budget Office, please visit budget.wv.gov/reportsandcharts/revenuereports/Pages/default.aspx.

Campus Carry

Last session, three bills were introduced to authorize the right to carry guns on college campuses. The bills were not debated by the Legislature. During this coming session, we expect this issue to be a major priority for gun rights groups, including the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the Citizens Defense League (CDL).

To review bills from last year, please visit:

HB 2559

wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Text_HTML/2017_SESSIONS/RS/bills/hb2559%20intr.pdf

HB 2713

wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Text_HTML/2017_SESSIONS/RS/bills/hb2713%20intr.pdf

HB 2835

wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Text_HTML/2017_SESSIONS/RS/bills/hb2835%20intr.pdf

New Members and Appointments

Governor Justice has recently made several appointments to the Legislature.

House of Delegates

- ✓ Jeff Campbell – to replace Stephen Baldwin, who was appointed to the Senate
- ✓ Dianna Graves – to replace Nancy Foster, who resigned
- ✓ D. Rolland “Buck” Jennings – to replace Tony Lewis, who passed away

Senate

- ✓ Stephen Baldwin – to replace Ron Miller, who was appointed Agriculture Liaison by Governor Justice
- ✓ Mark Drennan – to replace Mike Hall, who was appointed Chief of Staff by Governor Justice

Legislative Calendar and Important Dates

Interim Meetings	January 7-9, 2018
First Day of Regular Session	January 10, 2018
Governor’s State of the State Address	January 10, 2018
Higher Education Day at the Capitol	January 23, 2018
Monongalia County Day at the Capitol	January 30, 2018
WVU and WVU Extension Day at the Capitol	February 20, 2018
Last Day of Regular Session	March 10, 2018

West Virginia Forward

Following the release of the summary of findings on September 27, the West Virginia Forward report has gained incredible momentum. WVU has joined with Marshall and the WV Department of Commerce on the initiative, and we have collaborated with a number of partners and organizations across the state, including state and local policymakers.

Working groups have been formed. Our partners are meeting on implementation strategies, and we will soon announce and appoint a steering committee.

The Joint Committee on Workforce and Economic Development received a briefing on the West Virginia Forward report during December interim meetings. Rochelle “Rocky” Goodwin, senior associate vice president for academic and public strategy, spoke to the joint committee about the study and its summary of findings. Josh Jarrell, deputy secretary of commerce, also joined Goodwin for the briefing and spoke about Commerce’s efforts to develop and implement some of the findings.

To read the report, please visit wvforward.wvu.edu.

For questions or more information, contact Travis Mollohan, director, State and Local Relations, email: tmolloh1@mail.wvu.edu; phone: 304-400-4963

Institutional Flexibility and Freedom

During November interims, the Joint Committee on Education was provided an update by WVU, Marshall and the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine on the implementation of **HB 2815** and **HB 2542**.

Representatives of WVU spoke about the recent adoptions of talent and culture policies, as well as the Campus Conversations held to discuss the bill and potential changes.

WVU at the State Capitol

Travis Mollohan and Rocco Fucillo, both from WVU's State and Local Relations team, represent WVU at the State Capitol during the legislative session. They can answer questions about any issues addressed by the Legislature. Contact info: Travis Mollohan (tmolloh1@mail.wvu.edu) or Rocco Fucillo (rsfucillo@mail.wvu.edu).

More Information

To learn more about the Legislature, including district maps, bill tracking, committee assignments and a summary of legislative activities, please visit www.wvlegislature.gov.

To learn more about WVU's legislative initiatives, please visit governmentrelations.wvu.edu.