



FAIRMONT
STATE
UNIVERSITY

Presidential Search



The Board of Governors has extended the search for the next president of Fairmont State University and invites expressions of interest, nominations, and applications.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The next president of Fairmont State University will have the opportunity to lead an institution that is healthy and stable, in no small measure because of the prudent leadership and management of retiring president Dr. Maria C. Bennett Rose. Against the background of declining demographics and a decline in the number of students enrolled in West Virginia's public institutions, Fairmont State has enjoyed stable enrollments over the past few years. Though the appropriation from the State

of West Virginia has declined steadily, Fairmont State has enjoyed good fiscal health. What is more, it has a history of effective strategic planning and implementation and it was reaffirmed in its accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission in 2012-13. And it is located in one of the strongest economic regions of West Virginia.

At the same time, Fairmont State is at a critical juncture in its history, and the new president will have the opportunity to exercise creative leadership, within the University, the region, and the state. It is time to engage the community in a new iteration of the University's strategic plan that will set priorities and delineate clearly the University's identity. And a capital campaign is in the planning phase. These will occur against the backdrop of further declines in state appropriations. Consequently, there is a need to identify



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strategic investments and create the funding to support them. The latter will require an effective engagement of the community in support of the University. It will also require finding ways for the University to meet the region's emerging educational needs and exploring new markets. In short, Fairmont State has a strong potential for growth; energetic, creative, and effective presidential leadership will be necessary to realize it.

In addressing these challenges, the new president will have the support of a university community with a strong sense of its own identity as a passionately student-centered institution that has a transformational effect on the students it enrolls.

THE FIRST PRIVATE NORMAL SCHOOL IN WEST VIRGINIA

Fairmont State University was founded in 1865 in Fairmont, West Virginia as West Virginia Normal School, a private institution for the education of teachers. In 1867, it was purchased by the state and became part of the state normal school system. In 1917, it moved to its current location on a hillside on Locust Avenue and in 1923, it was authorized to grant four-year baccalaureate degrees and was renamed

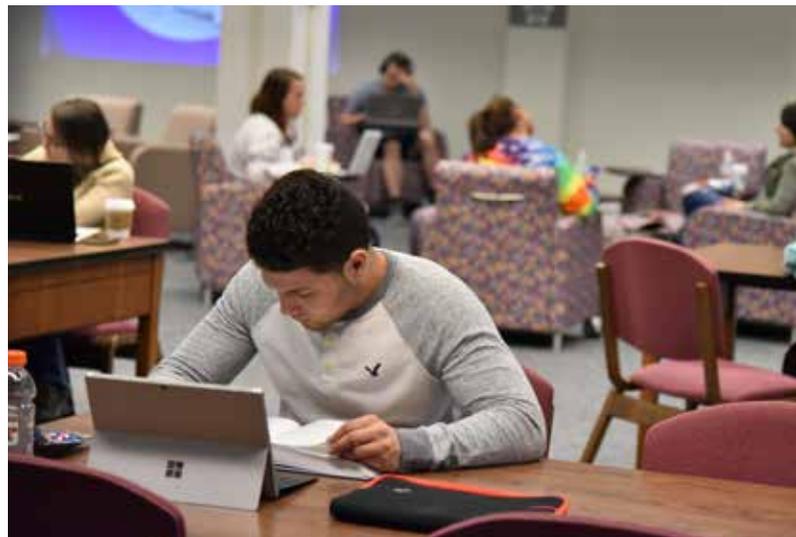
Fairmont State Teachers College and later simply Fairmont State College. In 2004, it became Fairmont State University, authorized to offer both baccalaureate and graduate degrees.

In 1974, a technical and community college was founded on Fairmont State's campus and under its aegis. In 2009, the community college became a separate institution with its own board and president, and separately accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Named in honor of West Virginia's first governor Francis H. Pierpont, Pierpont Community and Technical College is still co-located with Fairmont State and offers an abundance of opportunities for institutional partnerships.

The University also possesses two branch campuses, the Gaston Caperton Center in Clarksburg and the Robert C. Byrd National Aerospace Education Center in Bridgeport, both of which it shares with Pierpont. Pierpont has sites in Braxton and downtown Fairmont.

FAIRMONT STATE UNIVERSITY TODAY

Fairmont State is a multi-site regional comprehensive university whose mission is to meet the higher education





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needs of students in north central West Virginia. It is a passionately student-centered community, committed to accessibility and student success, and justifiably proud of its students' accomplishments. It seeks to provide "excellent teaching, flexible learning environments, and superior services" and aspires to be recognized nationally for the quality of the education it provides.

Fairmont State offers over 80 programs of study leading to associate's, bachelor's or master's degrees. It enrolls 3242 full-time and 465 part-time undergraduates and 298 graduate students. Ninety percent of its students are from West Virginia. Students are taught by 189 full-time and 147 part-time faculty, creating a 14:1 student /faculty ratio, with an average class size of 22. It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, its most recent reaffirmation being in 2012-13.

Fairmont State is governed by a 12-member Board of Governors appointed by the Governor of West Virginia. It is also part of the West Virginia State University System which is coordinated by the Higher Education Policy

Commission, located in Charleston. Fundraising for the University is conducted by the Fairmont State Foundation. The University has some 35,000 living alumni.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

All baccalaureate students are required to take a general studies curriculum that requires one three-hour course from each of 16 areas of study. The University also offers an honors program that includes special honors sections of general studies, a senior project, and a variety of opportunities for educational and cultural enrichment, including international study/travel.

Fairmont State offers associate's degrees in seven subject areas and baccalaureate degrees in 45 subject areas. It currently offers five master's degrees. Instruction is offered at the main campus as well as at the several branch campuses and online.

The College of Liberal Arts offers majors in the social and behavioral sciences and language and literature. It offers





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a minor in folklore studies and is the administrative home of the West Virginia Folklife Center. It has strong programs in criminal justice and national security and intelligence; it offers a master's degree in criminal justice.

The College of Science and Technology offers majors in the natural sciences, mathematics, and computer science. Students may complete both associate's degrees and baccalaureate majors in engineering technology and aviation, the latter offered at the Robert C. Byrd National Aerospace Education Center. It also offers majors in occupational safety, forensic science, and science education. It has recently developed a master's degree in architecture, the only such program in West Virginia.

The School of Business is ACBSP-accredited and offers baccalaureate degrees in accounting, health care management, and information systems management. It also offers a bachelor of business administration degree with opportunities to concentrate in management, finance, marketing, and business, and an MBA.

The School of Education, Health and Human Performance is the home of an NCATE-accredited education program that offers baccalaureate degrees in elementary and secondary

education, physical education, health education, and community health education. It also offers the master of arts in teaching, the master of education in six areas of concentration, and certification in reading and multi-categorical special education.

The School of Fine Arts offers baccalaureate degrees in art, music, communication, and theatre, including options in each area for degrees in education. In addition to academic instruction, the School supports an array of performance groups in music and theatre that not only develop student talent, but also create a presence for the arts both at the University and in the community.

The School of Nursing offers associate's and baccalaureate degrees in nursing. The associate's degree is available in a traditional class setting, online, or in a special weekend program.

CAMPUS LIFE

Though Fairmont State serves a wide variety of students from its region, the overwhelming majority are full-time and of traditional age. Sixty percent of the first-year students live on campus; 28 percent of all students live on



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campus. Consequently, the University has a rich campus life with a full array of student clubs and organizations. A large number of these organizations are academic honor or interest societies. The University is also home to both national and local Greek fraternities and sororities. There is a strong intramural program, excellent fitness facilities, and club sports in cheerleading, fishing, and men's and women's rugby. The impressive Falcon Center is located at the heart of campus, providing excellent student support and services and serving as a focal point for student life.

A point of pride for the University is its Model UN team which has competed for the past three years in the National Model UN in New York City. The last two years it has been ranked third and second.

FSU sponsors an NCAA Division II athletic program, offering intercollegiate competition in seven men's sports and nine women's sports: acrobatics, baseball, men's and women's basketball, football, men's and women's golf, women's soccer, softball, men's and women's swimming,

men's and women's tennis, and women's volleyball. It competes in the Mountain East Conference, which is composed of similar institutions from Virginia, West Virginia, and Ohio.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Strategic Planning In 2006, the University adopted a strategic plan, *Defining Our Future*. In 2010 several factors caused the University in to reexamine and revise the plan, among them: a declining number of high school graduates over the next 10 years; declining state appropriations for public higher education; a greater need for creating and maintaining graduate programs; a university presidential transition; increased economic uncertainty; and the separation of Fairmont State from Pierpont Community & Technical College. What emerged was a revision of the plan, *Redefining Our Future: 2010-2012*. The revised plan had three priorities, quality, distinction, and financial strength and resource stewardship, which were translated



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into six basic goals. The University has been implementing the plan since then. (See <http://www.fairmontstate.edu/assessment-effectiveness/strategic-plan-2010-2012-update-redefining-our-future>).

Enrollment Management The number of high school graduates has declined for the past decade, a trend projected to continue through 2018. As a result, the enrollment at West Virginia's public universities has declined steadily. While Fairmont State's enrollment experienced a similar decline, over the past three years enrollments have remained stable, in some categories even increasing slightly. The first-year-to-second-year retention rate is currently 69 percent; the six-year graduation rate is 30 percent, the latter being below benchmark institutions and an opportunity for growth.

A significant percentage of the student body is first-generation college students. Seventy-two percent receive financial aid; 60 percent receive need-based grant aid. On average, the University meets 70 percent of demonstrated need. Two percent of the student body are Hispanic, 5.7 percent are African-America, .5 percent are Asian, and 3.5 percent are multi-racial.

Financial Health Due to sound fiscal management, Fairmont State has remained financially solid in an environment of decreasing state funding. The FY'16 budget was \$61 million; the FY'17 in-state tuition and fees were \$6950. Net student tuition and fees constituted 23 percent of revenue; the state appropriation was 26 percent; and state grants and contracts (which include state financial aid) was 10 percent. As it is in most states, the trajectory of state appropriations has been downward, the decline averaging 5-7 percent per year. The future portends more of the same. To make matters worse, FSU arguably receives less generous funding from the State than do its peer institutions in the State. To accommodate this decrease, net tuition and fees have been increased over this period, rising 120 percent over ten years. However, Fairmont State may be reaching a critical juncture where program assessment is needed to enable the University to invest in growth areas



while at the same time keeping the tuition and fees within the reach of the students and families it serves. And with the anticipated decline of state funding, alternate revenue streams must be developed.

Fundraising The Fairmont State Foundation coordinates all fundraising activities for the University. A 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization, it is governed by an independent and self-perpetuating board composed of 23



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alumni and friends of the University, the president of the University serving as an ex-officio member. The Fairmont State Athletic Association is the arm of the Foundation devoted to fundraising for athletics. The Foundation has a staff of six, the president of the Foundation serving as an ex-officio member of the university president's cabinet. In addition, the president of the Foundation coordinates the efforts of three University staff members responsible for athletic fundraising and alumni relations. The current focus of the Foundation is on endowment growth and scholarships. A major campaign is now in the planning phase; the next president of the University will be expected to play a major role not only in its design but also in its success. The Foundation raises roughly \$2 million a year; currently the value of its endowment is \$20 million. For more information, please visit: www.FSUFoundation.org

FAIRMONT

A scenic city of some 19,000 residents, Fairmont is situated along the Monongahela River and nestled in the mountains of West Virginia. It is the county seat of Marion County and is part of the Morgantown-Fairmont metropolitan area of some 200,000 residents. Fairmont is 90 miles south of Pittsburgh; 180 miles from Washington, DC; and within easy reach of a number of cities in Maryland, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Fairmont's economy is based on the production of coal, gas, and electricity. It has recently created a high-technology business park that is part of the Tech Corridor that extends along I-79 south out of Pittsburgh.

Marion County is known for its natural beauty and is an excellent location for outdoor recreation of various kinds. It also has a strong sense of its cultural heritage and, together with Fairmont State, is eager to preserve and promote it.

North Central West Virginia is one of the state's strongest economic regions. Its unemployment rate is below the state average and its population growth and growth in per capita personal income both exceed the state average. These trends are projected to continue, with employment

growth especially strong in business services, health and education, and construction.

THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President is the chief executive officer of the University, reports directly to the Board of Governors, and works cooperatively with the Higher Education Policy Commission and the other public universities in West Virginia. The President's direct reports are: the Provost, the Vice President of Administrative and Fiscal Affairs (CFO), the Vice President for Student Services, the Vice President and Chief Information Officer, the Associate Vice President for Communications, the Athletic Director, and the President of the FSU Foundation. The President is supported by an executive assistant, an administrative associate, and a director of operations, and is an ex-officio member of the FSU Foundation Board.

LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

The decline in state funding has created the opportunity and the necessity for the new president to work creatively with the University and the wider community to carve out an exciting path forward. To do this effectively, the new president will have to focus on the following priorities.

Strategic Planning. The University's strategic plan was updated in 2010-12. Consequently, it is time for a new plan. However, the need for the University to come to terms with declining state funding creates a greater urgency for planning. The University will have to define its place among the other institutions of higher learning in West Virginia. At the same time, it will have to identify those current and new programs that meet the needs of the region and will create enrollment growth. It will also have to think carefully about its relationship to the industries and organizations in the region and explore mutually beneficial partnerships with them. The new president will be expected to have a good understanding of strategic planning and be able to provide the vision and leadership for the planning effort.



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Affirming and Enhancing the Character and Culture of the University. Fairmont State is a deeply student-centered campus; faculty and staff both are strongly committed to creating opportunities for students and helping them achieve beyond their expectations. Students find their education at Fairmont State transformational and the University community takes its greatest pride in the accomplishments of its students. As a result, Fairmont creates strong and lasting bonds of community among students, faculty, staff, and alumni. In making the changes necessary to position the University for a bright future, the new president must understand, embrace, preserve, and enhance this campus ethos. This will include affirming and protecting the culture of teaching excellence that is central to Fairmont's identity.

Community Engagement. The key to a better future for Fairmont State is to partner with the various segments of the community. As a public university, it is dependent on the good will of the state legislature. The new president will have to be effective in making the case for Fairmont State with local legislators, in Charleston, and with the Higher Education Policy Commission. At the same time,

the new president will be expected to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses in the region. This may involve working to develop degree programs or institutes that serve regional needs; it will also include enlisting the support of regional leaders, corporations, and institutions. The new president will have to partner effectively with the Foundation to cultivate friendships and raise funds, to bring the University's resources to the community, and to make the case for Fairmont State in the region. These separate activities are intricately interwoven and must be done well.

Strategic Budgeting. With the decline in state appropriations, Fairmont State will have to align its budgetary priorities more carefully with its strategic priorities. Growth is possible, but it will require using resources well to promote growth rather than simply to continue the status quo. This will require the new president not only to budget creatively and garner new resources, but also, in an atmosphere of shared governance, to make the hard choices about what programs are worthy of investment.





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Enrollment Growth. Though enrollment at Fairmont State has been stable over the past few years, this situation cannot be taken for granted nor should it be regarded as the best the University can and should do. Increasing retention and graduation rates fit with the University's strong commitment to student success; they would also increase enrollment. At the same time, the University has identified growth in graduate programs as a priority that will both meet the needs of the community and increase enrollment. The North Central region of West Virginia is projected to experience population growth over the next few years that exceeds the state average. And online learning as well as Fairmont State's easy access to other population centers suggests there are new markets to be explored. The next president will have to have a good sense of strategic enrollment management and the ability to maximize the many opportunities open to Fairmont State.

Diversity. While the United States is becoming an increasingly diverse nation, West Virginia has experienced less of this diversity. However, a Fairmont State education needs to prepare students to succeed in a diverse world. The new president will not only need to have a commitment to diversity but also the ability to see the ways in which it can be woven into the culture of the north central region of West Virginia.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate for the presidency of Fairmont State will have:

- A doctoral degree
- An understanding of and strong commitment to Fairmont State's mission
- Experience as a faculty member in higher education
- Successful leadership and administrative experience in higher education or some comparable endeavor
- Successful and creative work with state legislators
- A proven record of fundraising
- An understanding of strategic enrollment management

- An understanding of and commitment to shared governance
- Excellent communication and public relations skills
- Financial acumen and a record of success in strategic thinking and budgeting
- High energy
- The ability to inspire trust and confidence

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

To apply, candidates must send a letter of application in which they address the leadership priorities and qualifications outlined in this prospectus, a curriculum vita, and contact information (names, phone numbers, and email addresses) for five references in a single MS Word or PDF document to PresidentFairmontState@agbsearch.com.

For full consideration applications should be received by August 7, 2017.

Inquiries and nominations should be directed to:

Robert Holyer, Ph.D.
Senior Consultant
AGB Search
rkh@agbsearch.com
804-359-9370
804-402-6736 (c)

All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in the strictest confidence; references will not be contacted without the candidate's expressed permission.

Fairmont State University provides equal opportunity to all prospective and current members of the student body, faculty, and staff on the basis of individual qualifications and merit without regard to race, color, gender, national origin, age, height, weight, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression/association as identified and defined by law in employment, admissions, and educational programs, and activities.