

CHAPTER 288

AN ACT establishing a commission to study beneficial relationships between institutions of higher education and municipalities.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. a. There is established a study commission for the purpose of examining the development of mutually beneficial relationships between institutions of higher education and the municipalities in which the institutions are located. The commission shall consist of 17 members as follows:

(1) the Secretary of Higher Education, or a designee and the Director of the Division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs, or a designee;

(2) 11 members appointed by the Governor, including a representative of the State colleges and universities established pursuant to chapter 64 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, a representative of the public research universities, a representative of the county colleges, a representative of the independent colleges and universities, a mayor or designee of a municipality in which a State college or university is located, a mayor or designee of a municipality in which a public research university is located, a mayor or designee of a municipality in which a county college is located, a mayor or designee of a municipality in which an independent college or university is located, a representative of the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, a representative of the American Federation of Teachers, and a representative of the New Jersey Education Association; and

(3) four members of the public with demonstrated expertise or interest in issues related to the work of the commission. The President of the Senate, the Speaker of the General Assembly, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the General Assembly shall each appoint one of the public members.

b. Appointments to the commission shall be made within 30 days of the effective date of this act. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments were made.

c. Members of the commission shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties within the limits of funds made available to the commission for its purposes.

2. a. The commission shall organize as soon as practicable, but no later than 30 days following the appointment of its members. The commission shall choose a chairperson from among its members and shall appoint a secretary who need not be a member of the commission.

b. The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education shall provide such professional staff and related support services as the commission requires to carry out its work. The commission also shall be entitled to call to its assistance and avail itself of the services of the employees of any State, county, or municipal department, board, bureau, commission, or agency as it may require and as may be available to it for its purposes.

3. It shall be the duty of the study commission to examine the creation and implementation of mutually beneficial relationships between the State's institutions of higher education and the municipalities in which the institutions are located. The commission shall study and consider issues including, but not limited to, the following:

a. ways in which institutions of higher education and municipalities may work closely together to foster relationships that will benefit the institution, the institution's students, and the community;

b. ways to increase the engagement of institutions of higher education with their surrounding communities in order to address and respond to community needs;

c. specific types of structured partnerships that may mutually benefit institutions of higher education and their surrounding communities including, but not limited to, partnerships related to academic programs, research, student internship and work opportunities, and community service and outreach;

d. the process by which an institution of higher education may acquire additional land, including whether the municipality should be required to approve the procurement of new land; and

e. recommendations or best practices for institutions of higher education and municipalities regarding the creation and implementation of mutually beneficial relationships and partnerships.

4. The commission shall issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor, and to the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), no later than 12 months after the commission organizes.

5. This act shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment, and the commission shall expire 30 days after the submission of its report.

Approved November 8, 2021.