

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 61

WHEREAS, New Jersey's higher education system is a vital component in expanding economic opportunity and ensuring continued prosperity for New Jerseyans; and

WHEREAS, every New Jerseyan, regardless of life circumstances, should have the opportunity to obtain a high-quality credential that prepares them for life after college; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's economy depends on its residents obtaining the education and skills needed for a 21st-century economy, meaning efforts to close equity and attainment gaps in higher education in the State must be prioritized; and

WHEREAS, in order to increase the number of New Jerseyans that possess a high-quality credential, New Jersey must develop a comprehensive higher education plan; and

WHEREAS, the development of a comprehensive and thoughtful plan requires the input of stakeholders inside and outside government, who can bring expertise that will assist in the development of best practices necessary to increase student attainment in higher education in the State;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PHILIP D. MURPHY, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby established the Task Force on New Jersey's Plan for Higher Education (the "Task Force"). The Task Force will be divided into five Working Groups, which collectively are charged with providing recommendations to the Governor and shall, among other issues specific to their Working Groups, consider the following goals for students attending college in the State: (1) early exposure to college; (2) clear and comprehensible financial aid information; (3) affordable and predictable educational costs; (4) experiential learning opportunities; (5)

supportive faculty and staff; (6) support for on-time college completion; (7) opportunities to earn college credit outside of the classroom; (8) high-quality academic programs; (9) safe, supportive, and inclusive campuses; (10) student input in decisions that affect their education; and (11) any other objective referred to the Working Groups by the Governor.

2. The five Working Groups shall consist of the following:

- a. Working Group on Creating On-ramps to College, which shall be responsible for developing proposals to increase postsecondary access for all students in the State and developing innovative solutions to address the equity gaps in college attendance by race and socioeconomic status;
- b. Working Group on Making College Affordable, which shall be responsible for examining potential new state funding models and exploring approaches to more meaningful collaboration among institutions to meaningfully reduce higher education prices for students and families;
- c. Working Group on Student Success, which shall be responsible for identifying evidence-based and otherwise promising strategies to boost college completion at New Jersey's colleges and close equity gaps in student success;
- d. Working Group on Safe and Inclusive Learning Environments, which shall be responsible for developing best practices to enhance safety and support services on campus, and giving students a voice in these important campus matters; and

- e. Working Group on Research, Innovation, and Talent, which shall be responsible for exploring ways to create stronger ties between businesses and higher education by promoting industry-academic partnerships, experiential learning opportunities, and programs to meet market needs.

3. The Task Force shall consist of at least 10 members, including at least two student members, who shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Each Working Group shall have two co-chairpersons, who shall be designated by the Governor. The Governor may, as determined to be appropriate, appoint additional members, and may designate these additional members to serve on any of the Working Groups. These additional members shall also serve at the pleasure of the Governor. All public members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

4. The Task Force shall organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of its members, and the Working Groups shall convene as often as practicable and as requested by the Governor or chairpersons.

5. Each Working Group shall issue a final report to the Governor and the Secretary of Higher Education with its recommendations no later than nine months after the effective date of this Order.

6. The Task Force shall expire upon submission of final reports from all the Working Groups. The reports of the Working Groups shall be provided to the Legislature and shall be made available to the public.

7. The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education shall provide staff support to the Task Force, to the extent permitted by law. The Task Force is authorized to call upon any department,

office, division or agency of this State to supply it with data and any other information or assistance available to such agency as the Task Force deems necessary to execute its duties under this Order. Each department, office, division or agency of this State is hereby required, to the extent not inconsistent with law, to cooperate fully with the Task Force within the limits of its statutory authority and to furnish it with such assistance on as timely a basis as is necessary to accomplish the purpose of this Order.

8. The Task Force may elicit public input from individuals, including those associated with institutions of higher education, organizations, community groups, and other interested parties.

9. The Task Force and the Working Groups shall be purely advisory in nature.

10. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
 26th day of March,
 Two Thousand and Nineteen,
 and of the Independence of
 the United States, the Two
 Hundred and Forty-Third.

[seal]

/s/ Philip D. Murphy

Governor

Attest:

/s/ Matthew J. Platkin

Chief Counsel to the Governor