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## **WVTESOL Statement Supporting International Students and Intensive English Programs in West Virginia**

Adopted by the WVTESOL Executive Board March 1, 2017

West Virginia institutions of higher education enrolled thousands of international students during the 2015-2016 academic year for both short and long-term study, bringing substantial, but often under-recognized, educational and economic benefits to the state. West Virginia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (WVTESOL) is working to help inform our state's education and business leaders about the importance of continuously growing and supporting our state's high-quality international student programs.

Students who come from abroad to study in West Virginia bring cultural diversity, fresh perspectives, and opportunities for global connections to our campuses. They enrich the educational experiences of local students and add energy and diversity to campus and community life. Local students are able to collaborate with peers from around the world and develop a multicultural perspective which will serve them well in today's global economy. In turn, the international students, the best and brightest from around the world, learn first-hand about the culture, people and values of the United States. The mutual understanding and relationships they walk away with are of benefit here and in their home countries, a jump-start for initiating global business prospects, and bolstering educational and cultural connections well into the future.

International students, specifically those in Intensive English Programs (IEPs) at WV higher education institutions, also bring significant economic advantages to the state. The 2016 annual "Open Doors" report from the Institute of International Education placed the number of international students at WVU, Marshall, the University of Charleston, Davis and Elkins University, and Fairmont State University at 4,150, an increase of 29%, and estimated these students' West Virginia expenditures at \$115,390,627. The vast majority of these funds came to WV from outside the United States.

WVTESOL members know firsthand how much international students contribute to our educational institutions, local communities and to the state's economy. We urge you to join us in working to make certain that our state continues to be sought out by international students because it is a welcoming place with high quality International and Intensive English programs, programs which bring invaluable educational, cultural and economic benefits to West Virginians.

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Institute of International Education, Fact Sheets and Infographics (2016)

<https://www.iie.org/Research-and-Insights/Open-Doors/Fact-Sheets-and-Infographics/US-State-Fact-Sheets/2016>