

(b) The Council shall appoint an executive director who shall not be subject to the provisions of Article 64A of this Code, title "Merit System" and who shall perform such functions as the Council may prescribe; and the Council may employ such other assistants as are in the budget provided. The executive director and all professional and clerical employees of the Council shall be eligible for membership in, and shall become members of, the Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Maryland. However, those employees certified as professional employees pursuant to a determination by the Council may, in lieu of that membership, participate in an optional retirement program if adopted by the Council as provided in § 217 of Article 77 of this Code. The salaries of all employees and the administrative expenses of the Council shall be as provided in the annual budget.]

[30.

(a) It shall be the duty of the Council to coordinate the growth and overall development of higher education in the State, to conduct studies concerning the various aspects of public higher education in the State, to report the result of its researches, and to make recommendations to the governing boards of the public institutions of higher education and to appropriate State officials with respect to the matters it has considered. The functions of the Council shall include the following:

(1) Prepare programs for the orderly growth and overall development of the State system of public higher education to meet trends in population and the changing social and technical requirements of the economy;

(2) Investigate and evaluate the needs throughout the State for undergraduate, graduate and adult education, for professional and technical training and for research facilities, and present plans and recommendations for the establishment and location of new facilities and programs or for major alterations in existing programs or facilities;

(3) Recommend all new degree programs at the doctoral, master's, baccalaureate, and associate levels in all public institutions;

(4) Study and make recommendations regarding the statewide coordination of the activities of the appropriate agencies, and institutions of higher learning, academically, administratively and fiscally, with the objective of achieving the most effective and economical employment of existing education facilities and of fostering a climate of cooperation and unified endeavor in the field of public higher education;

(5) Set standards to be followed by the