

University System of Maryland and the individual campuses are encumbered by State administrative regulations and procedures and an excessive number of mandated reports; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force found that the presidents of University institutions must have significant autonomy to manage their institutions, while being accountable to the Board of Regents, as envisioned in the 1988 legislation; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force recommended the concept of reestablishing the University System of Maryland as a public corporation with management flexibility necessary to respond to the needs of the students, State and citizens in a changing economy; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force found that the Maryland Higher Education Commission has a vital role in assessing and articulating the statewide higher education needs and goals of the State, and in coordinating the segments of higher education; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force also found that the role of the Maryland Higher Education Commission in the budget process appears to overlap with the authority of the Board of Regents and requires clarification. It also found that the Maryland Higher Education Commission academic program approval process and review of existing programs are also areas of significant overlap and potential barriers to the ability of University institutions to respond quickly to public demands and needs; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force reviewed the 1998 State Plan for Higher Education and found it to be a useful strategic planning document, but felt that the Plan did not contain sufficient detail to provide a complete framework to guide higher education and lacked buy-in from major stakeholders. Further, the Task Force believes that institutional mission statements should lend support to the State Plan for Higher Education and must evolve to reflect environmental and market conditions; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force recognizes that the University must gain greater private financial support. The Task Force supports the reestablishment of the Private Donation Incentive Program to encourage private giving and promote excellence in higher education; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force supports the College Preparation Intervention Program and encourages the State to take advantage of matching federal funds to reestablish this successful program; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force recommended that the University System institutions receive greater, more stable State funding in order to meet its mission goals. While calculating a funding base for all institutions should be treated as an urgent matter, certain allocations are needed immediately to provide a head-start on addressing serious fiscal deficiencies; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force reaffirmed that higher education is an engine that drives economic growth and will be key to competing successfully in the 21st century. The Governor and General Assembly are strongly committed to higher education in Maryland; now, therefore,