HISTORY OF LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The Morrill Act of 1862 established the United States’ unique system of land-grant colleges and universities. Throughout their 155-year history, these institutions have played a critical role in providing access to higher education.

In 1914, the Smith-Lever Act attached Cooperative Extension Services to land-grants, and they continue to play an important role in the public outreach of these schools. In addition to providing accessible higher education, land-grants are responsible for teaching, research and service activities that address public issues such as food security and rural community development.

Today, there are 106 land-grant colleges and universities, and each U.S. state and territory is home to at least one.

THE CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF LAND-GRANT EDUCATION

Housed at the WVU College of Education and Human Services, the Center for the Future of Land-Grant Education is the nation’s only higher education research center focused solely on land-grant institutions. The Center’s director is Nathan M. Sorber, assistant professor of higher education at CEHS.

The Center seeks to advance knowledge in the following areas:

- Land-grant and public higher education policy and practice
- Student access, retention and success
- Higher education engagement, community outreach and economic development
- Land-grant leadership and institutional effectiveness

Current research projects include:

- The State of the Land-Grant Universities and Colleges Annual Report
- An Investigation of Relationships Between College Math Quality and Students’ Degree Completion and Initial Earnings
- Appalachian Access Project
- Appalachian Undergraduate Women Project
- Appalachian Teacher Pathways Project
- Opportunities and Barriers to Postsecondary Access in West Virginia

The Center is affiliated with three graduate programs at WVU:

- MA in Higher Education
- EdD in Higher Education Administration
- PhD in Higher Education Administration

For more information, please visit landgrantcenter.wvu.edu.