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Release Date: December 15, 2004
Last Update: December 15, 2004

Granholtm Calls Higher Education Report a Road Map for Fundamental Change, Stronger Economic Future

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Findings Will Lead to Economic Growth, 21st Century Jobs



LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholtm today called findings of the Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, which spent the last six months studying the link between post secondary education and economic growth in Michigan, a "road map" for fundamental change and a stronger economic future for Michigan.

The Governor made her remarks after accepting the report of the bipartisan Commission on Higher Education and Economic Growth, chaired by Lt. Governor John D. Cherry, Jr., that was charged with finding ways to double the number of college graduates in Michigan over the next ten years.

"If we achieve this goal, Michigan will win the race for economic growth and prosperity for decades to come" said Granholtm. "This report makes it clear that our state's path to a robust economy with good paying 21st century jobs requires all our residents to complete their education beyond high school."

The commission's recommendations call for higher standards in Michigan's high schools to prepare all students for post secondary education and a new compact between the state and its citizens to guarantee all students the opportunity to earn a college degree.

Other recommendations call on Michigan's colleges and universities to do a better job helping students complete degrees or certification, to make it easier for students to transfer from one higher education institution to another, and to bring larger numbers of adult workers who have earned college credits in the past back to campus to finish their degrees.

The 19 recommendations include a call for replacing the high school MEAP test with an assessment that can be used for college admission purposes to encourage students to pursue their education beyond high school and to measure student performance against the new Michigan standards.

The full report may be read on the commission's web site at www.cherrycommission.org.

Cherry said the commission found an undeniable link between post secondary education and economic success in a changing economy.

"The days when you could earn a good living in Michigan with only a high school diploma are long gone," Cherry said. "We need to fundamentally change our thinking to match the realities of today's economy, and that means post secondary education for all."

Cherry said there is a tremendous disparity in annual earnings between people who hold a doctoral degree (\$70,148) and a bachelor's degree (\$46,800) and those with a high school diploma (\$28,808) and who failed to complete high school (\$20,592).

Since being appointed by Granholtm in July, the 41-member commission has conducted in-depth study of issues related to educational attainment and the economy. The commission held six public hearings across the state and collected public input by mail and through its website.

Granholtm thanked the commission for the speed with which it had concluded its work and said her

administration will act on its recommendations with equal urgency.

"We are going to move quickly to implement these recommendations," Granholm said. "Michigan's future cannot wait. The transformation of our economy demands that our workers be better educated and trained in the future."

The commission's work was supported by a federal grant program and by private sector donors including DaimlerChrysler, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and Manulife Financial.

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