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## Higher Ed Commissioner Teresa Lubbers Announces Plans to Step Down

*Country's longest serving higher education executive officer will serve through March 2022*

**(INDIANAPOLIS)** – After more than 12 years of service, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers announced on Tuesday her plan to leave her current role at the conclusion of the 2022 legislative session. Lubbers will also be stepping down as chair of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet. Currently the nation's longest serving State Higher Education Executive Officer (SHEEO), Lubbers has dedicated nearly three decades to supporting and working on behalf of Indiana's students, schools, and economic and workforce needs.

"Throughout my career, I have been blessed with opportunities for service that have enriched my life both personally and professionally. None of these roles has been more meaningful to me than my tenure at the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. It has been my privilege to serve alongside a talented staff and visionary Commission members who are committed to students and the state. I look forward to new ways to contribute to this next chapter of my life while ensuring a smooth transition to new leadership for the Commission," said Lubbers.

Lubbers was chosen by the 14-member Commission in 2009 after she represented District 30 in the Indiana Senate for 17 years, where she led on education and economic development issues and was chair of the Senate Education and Career Development Committee. Members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor.

Gov. Eric J. Holcomb appointed Lubbers as chair of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet in 2019.

"Indiana has been fortunate to have Commissioner Lubbers devote her time in public service to the benefit of Hoosiers with her work in higher education and workforce issues for our state for many years," said Gov. Holcomb. "We are grateful for her passion for students and employers and for helping Indiana make strides toward ensuring all Hoosiers have the education and training they need to prosper."



Lubbers has served under six governors including Mitch Daniels, now serving as Purdue University's president.

"Teresa Lubbers' contributions during 12 years at the Commission for Higher Education will be seen as historic, but they are only part of the story. She has served Indiana for a half century with great skill at all three levels of government, somehow still making time for innumerable volunteer and civic involvements. To cite just one example of her legacy, thousands of young graduates of Indiana's charter schools owe their improved life prospects to Teresa Lubbers," Daniels said. "For those who know her personally, Teresa has been more than a respected colleague. She has led a life of integrity and moral example fully as admirable as her record of leadership. Indiana must hope that its next generation includes people who will take note of that example and do their best to emulate it."

Indiana Commission for Higher Education Chair Mike Alley points to Lubbers' strategic vision and innovative leadership as having "positioned Indiana among the best in the country for learners to achieve their full potential through high-quality, affordable education. Teresa has challenged Indiana to establish bold objectives and strong accountabilities centering on affordability, completion outcomes, and career preparedness," Alley said. "Her efforts have caused us to dramatically step up our game in Indiana and will positively impact our ability to compete not only in the U. S., but internationally, offering the best talent available. Teresa is genuinely recognized as a national leader in education and workforce development and through her efforts, has positioned Indiana as a model for other states."

Among the accomplishments during her time as Commissioner, Lubbers was charged with implementing Indiana's higher education strategic plans and moving the state toward its goal of at least 60 percent of Hoosiers with education and training beyond high school—gaining 15 percentage points toward that goal over the past several years. Under Lubbers' tenure, Indiana aligned distribution of financial aid with student success, with efforts resulting in the state being first in the Midwest and fourth in the nation in distributing need-based aid. Lubbers advocated for institutional funding based on Indiana's goals through outcomes-based funding and partnered with higher education providers, employers, policymakers and community leaders to strengthen the value proposition of higher education.

Boards and honors from Lubbers' long-tenured career include:

- Michael A. Carroll Award, *Indianapolis Business Journal*
- Exceptional Leader Award, State Higher Education Executive Office Inaugural Excellence Award
- Sagamore of the Wabash
- The Indiana Academy, Independent Colleges of Indiana
- Welsh-Bowen Distinguished Hoosier Award
- Government Leader of the Year, Indiana Chamber of Commerce
- Torchbearer Award, Women in Government, Indiana Commission on Women
- Former chair and member, State Higher Education Executive Officers
- Former chair and commissioner, Midwestern Higher Education Compact
- Commissioner, Education Commission of the States
- Past chair and member, Higher Learning Advocates
- Past chair and member, National Council of State Reciprocity Agreements

Lubbers began her career in public service with then Mayor of Indianapolis Richard Lugar as his public information officer. She served as deputy press secretary in Senator Lugar's office before pursuing a career in public relations and later running for office. Lubbers is a graduate of Warren Central High School. She holds an undergraduate degree from Indiana University and a master's in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

The Commission will conduct a comprehensive search for candidates in pursuit of Indiana's next higher education commissioner. Commission Vice Chair Jud Fisher will lead the search committee. Alley shares, "We look forward to a comprehensive and transparent process that will yield another outstanding leader for the Indiana Commission for Higher Education."

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#### **About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education**

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education is a 14-member public body created in 1971 to define the missions of Indiana's colleges and universities, plan and coordinate the state's postsecondary education system, and ensure that Indiana's higher education system is aligned to meet the needs of students and the state. The Commission includes representatives from each Congressional district, three at-large members, a college faculty representative and a college student representative. Learn more about the Commission's *Reaching Higher, Delivering Value* strategic plan at [www.in.gov/che/](http://www.in.gov/che/).

## **Comments About Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers**

### **Rep. Todd Huston, Speaker of the Indiana House of Representatives**

“Teresa Lubbers has been a fantastic public servant as a State Senator and as the Commissioner of Higher Education. Our state and, most importantly, our students have benefited from her strong leadership and visionary ideas in both roles. I consider her a mentor and friend and so thankful for her service to our state.”

### **Dr. Sue Ellspermann, president, Ivy Tech Community College**

“Commissioner Lubbers’ leadership has brought Indiana to the forefront in higher education nationally. Thanks to her advocacy and foresight, Indiana is a model for other states for higher education funding, dual credit, transfer, and financial aid policy. Throughout her career, she has engaged with higher education leaders to collaborate and innovate for the good of students, employers and Indiana’s economy.”

### **Dennis Bland, Commission for Higher Education (District 7), and president of the Center for Leadership Development**

“It has been a pleasure and honor to serve with Commissioner Lubbers since her appointment as Indiana’s Commissioner for Higher Education. Teresa’s appointment as Commissioner signaled that the state of Indiana was very serious about making headway in establishing Indiana as a leader in elevating Indiana’s overall higher education performance level and profile. Teresa is a Hoosier asset in every sense of the word. She is intelligent, fair, firm and funny. Through her outstanding leadership and service, she has helped position Indiana nicely for its next level of success. Like many others, I am grateful for her tremendous service to Indiana and am honored to have had the privilege to serve alongside her. Without question, Indiana is better for Teresa having served.”

### **Jamie Merisotis, president and CEO, Lumina Foundation**

“Commissioner Lubbers has had an astonishing number of successes in her career, but none more important than leading the charge on Indiana’s goal that 60% of working-age Hoosiers will have a quality college degree or credential by the year 2025. The progress achieved to date shows that she has had an indelible impact on our future as a state,” said Jamie Merisotis, Lumina Foundation’s President and CEO. “Her leadership in higher education, both at home in Indiana and nationally, has been best-in-class, a shining example of selfless public service that that all Hoosiers should emulate.”

### **Claire Fiddian-Green, president and CEO, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation**

“During her almost 30 years of public service, first as a State Senator and then as Commissioner for Higher Education, Teresa Lubbers has devoted her career to improving education and career outcomes for children and adults in Indiana,” said Claire Fiddian-Green, President & CEO of the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation. “She is highly regarded both nationally and across our state as a visionary leader who identifies and implements education policy ideas that are focused on real results for real people. I would like to thank Teresa for her extraordinary contributions to Hoosiers, and for serving as an inspiration to me and so many others who work in education. Her legacy will be remembered for years to come.”

### **Robert E. Anderson, Ph.D., president, SHEEO**

“Commissioner Lubbers has served as a stalwart leader for students, state and nation throughout her career. Her contributions to higher education and its progress have been significant and far-reaching. Personally, I have called on Commissioner Lubbers numerous times when considering policy solutions to complex higher education problems. She is well-respected by her peers as evidenced in her receiving our inaugural SHEEO Exceptional Leader Award. Commissioner Lubbers’ selfless service has been an example to us all, and her impact will serve the field far and wide for years to come.”

### **Christopher Murphy, III, Commission for Higher Education (District 2), president and CEO of 1st Source Corporation**

“Teresa understood the collaborative role the Commission plays with the institutions for which it is responsible and the importance of consistency of policy and its application, communication with all of its stakeholders, and strong leadership in achieving the Commissions goals. She mastered all three and always had quality education of Indiana’s youth as her primary objective. She believes deeply in the value of higher education and lifelong learning making sure both are available to all of Indiana’s citizens. She is trusting and trusted and has led the Commission with foresight, energy, grace, and wisdom. Indiana is the beneficiary of her good and lasting work. And those of us on the Commission are the beneficiary of her leadership and friendship.”