**Advisory Council of Faculty  
Representative Report to Faculty Senate  
December 2, 2016***from ACF meeting, November 18, 2016*

**Classified Staff:** The long-awaited Mercer pay scale/classifications (for classified staff) are scheduled to be implemented in July.

**Retirement:** HEPC has been negotiating with TIAA on costs/fees for participation. It is expected that this will result in lower fee deductions from ‘mandatory’ retirement accounts and very competitive costs for fee-based investment advice on voluntary contributions (related to changes in federal law about fiduciary responsibilities of financial advisers). Some other changes about loans taken from retirement accounts, ROTH conversions, and ‘catch-up’ contributions are also under consideration. These changes should take effect during the summer, and we should expect to receive information about them from our HR department and/or HEPC/TIAA.

At least one member of ACF experienced ‘issues’ with failure to deduct retirement contributions when the switch to OASIS happened. It’s probably a good idea to check your pay stubs for retirement withholding.

**HEPC Meeting:** Mary Beth Beller (MU) attended and reported on the HEPC meeting for November. Commissioner Mike Farrell has suggested that faculty come together to develop creative solutions for programs with low enrollments/graduations, including what to do with the faculty of closed programs. The Legislature wants this addressed. ACF discussed possibilities for working across institutions to keep programs going. One issue that would have to be resolved is which institution would get credit for the program. It is not clear whether this concern includes well-populated teaching fields. Vice Chancellor Corley Dennison pointed out that institutional BOGs make actual decisions about closing programs. HEPC only advises in these matters. Dr. Dennison said that he knows of no working plans for campus closures and consolidation, but a Clarksburg newspaper article has speculated on the possibility. The agenda for HEPC’s November meeting, including the ‘report card’ can be found at this website: <http://www.wvhepc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/11-18-16-Agenda-Amended.pdf>. Farrell wants institutions to find ways to distribute to students in an’ aggressive manner’ information about costs/benefits/income potential of our programs for them. HEPC’s student affairs page has some information on this. Such information helps students make decisions about how much debt to take on, as well as cost-effective ways to pursue their goals (Associates, 2+2, etc.) Vice Chancellor Dennison said that all institutions need to be think about stackable certificates (not just professional certificates) Approval of changes to series 11 (about approval and termination of programs) includes some protections for schools other than MU or WVU, to prevent MU and WVU from blocking new programs at other institutions. Other matters considered at the HEPC meeting included types of residency status (for tuition purposes) and consideration of the WVSU 10-year campus master plan.

**Vice Chancellor Dennison:** The first round of course equivalency responses are due to HEPC by Dec. 9. If there are no major issues, work will move to next round of common transfer courses, such as psychology.

There will be professional development workshops on ‘co-req’ math and composition courses, possibly in May of 2017. HEPC may fund travel and lodging. Peter Adams workshop at MU March 9. Capped at 40 seats.

Pilots are underway for dual credit/transition courses in high school. Vice Chancellor Dennison would like to get high school and higher education faculty together to coordinate and align these courses.

ACICS (Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools): The ability of ACICS to accredit schools may be ended or severely compromised by federal ruling against expected by end of the year. WV already requires all ACICS schools to get second accreditation. Series 52 (reauthorization of degree granting institutions) has been amended to end a loophole allowing Series 35 (diploma schools) from offering degrees without additional approval. (State is recognizing degrees from series 35 schools from before this change.)

Vice Chancellor Dennison commented on the new political landscape. For example, many U.S. senators want to ‘look at’ regional accreditation. He noted an expected 2% cut, due to an $87 million ‘hole.’ An HEPC PR person will be on Justice's transition team.

Issues at other campuses include a viability report for New River related to the possibility that it has too many properties for its size. There is a draft of bill to make Osteopathic school private, a proposal which has many problems but also some benefits.

ACF will hold its summer retreat July 15-17, 2017, at Pipestem. Legislators may be invited.