**Advisory Council of Faculty Report to the WVSU Faculty Senate Meeting  
October 2, 2020  
Barbara Ladner, ACF Representative**

Vice Chancellor Corley Dennison’s report:

1. Higher Ed Responses to COVID-19
   * Cases in WV have been relatively small and manageable. Overall, less than 1% of the college population has tested positive for COVID-9, and although there have been difficulties, contract tracing has thus far been effective.
   * The state has provided personal protective equipment, masks, and testing to institutions
   * Spring could see the beginning of a second outbreak, so it is likely that the Spring 2021 semester will be presented in modalities similar to that of the Fall 2020 semester.
   * The Chancellor of the HEPC is emphasizing the need for focus on mental health resources for students and counselors.  Institutional counseling and resource centers are experiencing increased activity due to lack of social engagement and other difficulties associated with COVID-19
   * Compared to other states, West Virginia’s higher education institutions are faring well in terms of the number of infections; for example, the University of Alabama has more cases that all WV institutions combined.
2. HEPC Updates
   * Fourteen professional development opportunities provided by the HEPC were well-attended.  The HEPC is looking to offer more opportunities in January.
   * The September 11 workshop relating to OER had over140 participants. The goal is to award 75 grants initially, with a number closer to 20 for the second round of awards. , $1,000 grants will be awarded upon the publishing of their OER courses on their respective institutional course schedules
   * Institutions should list any OER courses in their schedules and/or publish a list of OER classes on their school websites
3. Legislative Updates

* The logistical functioning of the State Legislature will be different this year due difficulties related to COVID-19.  The Capitol will likely close down galleries and expand seating within its chambers for the purposes of social distancing
* The actions of the state legislature will largely depend on election results.  It is likely that Republicans will continue to hold both houses, although a Democratic Senate is a possibility.
* There is a concern that the more significant financial effects of COVID-19 have not yet been felt with regard to state budget issues.

1. K-12 Issues

* WVDE has reported that statewide, there is an extreme shortage of substitute teachers.  The WVDE has suggested using student teachers to help manage this concern by awarding them with clinical hours.  Students who would potentially participate in this program could only serve as short-term substitutes (as opposed to long-term).

ACF Discussions:

1. 2020-2021 ACF Issues – *Possible* issues developed so far; the plan is to refine/narrow the list, divide it into issues vs. ‘talking points’

* Faculty resilience/instructional versatility
* Statewide enrollment trends/concerns
* Indispensability of higher ed in local communities in dealing with COVID-19
* HEPC providing workshops and training
* Innovations Pertaining to Great Teachers Seminar/professional development
* Need for distance learning, training, and support for faculty
* Advocacy on needed functions of HEPC
* Statewide library consortium (get report about success of that program)
* Technological infrastructure:  old tech, old computers, subpar connectivity, broadband
* As always, need for stable financial support for higher education
* ***PLEASE SHARE OTHER CONCERNS WITH ME:*** The ACF wants to hear all your concerns; even if they do not become legislative issues in a particular year, issues that crop repeatedly might need to be addressed with HEPC and/or the Legislature.

1. Other Matters

* The HEPC agrees that a global initiative (discussed by ACF at its last meeting) is well-worth pursuing through a legislative resolution. Clark Egnor, HEPC’s coordinator of international programs, can advise on geographical regions currently most open to international student recruitment. Rural schools, for example, might want to look toward developing relationships with communities in Africa and Central America.
* ACF may be talking to the Legislature about state code in relation to the course hours requirement of the Promise Scholarship.  Because thirty hours is required each academic year, it can cause student difficulties in regards to financial aid and appropriate course/program scheduling
* Retired teachers as adjuncts: Math departments often have difficulty finding adjuncts, and retired math teachers prove to be valuable educators.  Unfortunately, they are limited hour-wise by the state. (We think this has to do with income limits for those receiving state pensions.) ACF is looking into possible solutions to this quandary.
* Community colleges are advocating for the possible expansion of the West Virginia Invests Grant so that it includes 2 year transfer programs
* Some institutional BOGs may not be following ‘open meeting’ regulations, for example, voting to terminate programs in executive session on a day when the ‘regular’ BOG meeting had been cancelled.
* It does not seem that there will be any marked changes pertaining to institutional hiring practices for dual credit faculty this academic year, since the Higher Learning Commission and other accrediting bodies still require college faculty to have at least 18 hours of graduate credit in their teaching discipline,