**West Virginia State University**

**Faculty Senate Meeting**

**Friday, February 7, 2025**

**Present:** *(list was left on my desk when I went to a conference; I will send out minutes with the attendance list, so that you can send in corrections before minutes are uploaded)*

**Agenda**

1. Agenda Approved: Jeff Pietruszynski moved; Mark Wilson seconded
2. Minutes of December 2024 Meeting Approved: Jessica Barnes-Pietruszynski moved; Lena Lambert seconded

**Reports and Announcements**

* + - 1. President Ericke Cage said that how we perform as a university is critically important, especially on credits earned, recruitment, retention. Our interactions with students are essential. He urged faculty and staff to engage with students who are struggling to help get them across the finish line. Their success has an impact on our bottom line, even more now because of the funding formula. He said that we can’t compromise rigor, but we need to help them. He thanked people who came out to the town hall/listening sessions. The President and BOG will take what they heard and work on solutions. Facilities issues are being addressed around the clock, and Justin gave a presentation on the response plan at the beginning of the BOG meeting on Thursday. There will be a report on progress at the April BOG meeting. The President has an open door policy. Anyone can come in about anything, and the President will provide some kind of feedback within 24 hours. He can’t respond if he doesn’t know about something. He is focusing a lot of his time on our legislative agenda. The highest priority will be on continuing to receive 100% of our state Land Grant match. Also, our legislative team is making sure legislators know the value WVSU offers to West Virginia. He asked that we stay tuned and stay nimble to respond/adapt. In the capital campaign, we are 70% to goal of $25 million. Faculty and staff help is needed to make that a reality. He emphasized that this is a very dynamic times for higher education.
			Q&A: Jessica Barnes-Pietruszynski commented that many issues that students have are with offices, not faculty-related, including being treated neglectfully or rudely. She asked what is being done to be sure that offices are doing what they need to do? President Cage noted that retention requires cooperation of all parts of the University. We are trying to look into issues students raise. He reported that a member of the cabinet called the WVSU operator, and it took a while for anyone to pick up. He said that we need to do better with the basics. He’s asked Dr. Young to lead task force (IT, financial aid, housing, etc.) to get all the high-volume offices to have a system to make sure someone picks up the phone and gets the student to the correct office and the needed service. He said that we need customer service training (a few years ago staff were sent to observe at other schools, but it didn’t transfer very well). Sue Woodward commented that faculty need to be in offices for office hours, answer emails, return phone calls. She said that people need to be held accountable. The President said that the comment speaks for itself. Barbara Ladner asked about what we know/hear/expect about federal HBCU funding, but President Cage said that it is very hard to predict, with the possibility that the Department of Education will be disbanded. Ginta Palubinskas followed up, and President said that we are watching it, to respond as we can. A question from email asked whether NCUBO report be sent out before things are decided. The President said that his office will do its best to release as much as possible as soon as possible (e.g., they can’t release personnel information to general public).
			2. Justin McCallister (VP & CFO) explained many aspects of the Funding Formula. LeighAnn Davidson commented how much we appreciate Justin’s work keeping the lights on, etc.
			The funding formula came from HEPC and went into effect this academic year (we are now FY25 now; we will be in FY 26).
			One piece is base funding, which is the state appropriation, which doesn’t include Land Grant match but does include student success metrics, such as degree completion, workforce/economic impact/alignment, research/grant funding factors (~70% + outcomes considerations). The Legislators did not honor cost of living increase but did adjust for PEIA & payroll increases. Once outcomes are measured, we see whether we will have an outcomes gain or loss. More specifically, outcomes include progression (30, 60, 90 hours); completion (BA, MA, Post MA certificates, doctoral/law degrees); workforce (graduates earning wages in WV or in post-secondary education in WV); R&D (expenditures from grants); and degree awards per 100 full-time equivalents (FTE). There is also emphasis on on-time degree completion for specific focus populations: underprepared, adult, low-income; we get 1.8 multiplier effect for one criterion – 2.2 multiplier for all three. WVSU is allowed to work with HEPC to develop its weights to maximize outcomes of funding formula so that the weights total 100% (or 1.0) – worked with. This is reevaluated every 5 years. He also discussed the formula’s impact on us. HEPC puts out spread sheet where we can see how we are doing compared to sister institutions; data goes in and then weights are applied to scaled outcomes and compared to benchmarks in FY 22 (averaging 2019-2021). Also data are averaged over most recent 3 years. For FY 26, figures reflect inflation rate, but we don’t know whether legislature will honor that part. If an inflation rate is applied, we’ll go up a little. If not, we’ll go down by ~$348K. We are under our benchmark for all outcomes, except for master’s degrees awarded, 100 FTEs, & learning/working in WV.
			Ginta asked about not meeting benchmark for research expenditure. Justin said that our average for the benchmark had an outlier that made it high because of renovations of Carter building in that year. Also, our measure doesn’t include all our research expenditures. They pull data directly out of our financial reports, and what’s included is consistent. Alana asked about Early Enrollment credits earned; Justin said that since they haven’t earned 30 hours, they are not included in the progression numbers. LeighAnn asked folks to email questions they would like Justin to address in March. Justin will send the slides to LeighAnn who will send them to the faculty so that we can ask questions about them. Justin said that we should also email questions to Brenda.
			3. Dr. Lee Young (VP EMSA) discussed technology concerns, especially related to Slate, communication software used to communicate with students we have admitted. He said that there is an opportunity to get one or more individuals on campus to write code to fix Banner’s communication with other software packages, such as Slate. When asked what Slate does for WVSU, he said that it allows advisors and faculty to notate advising sessions, student issues for which they need support. LeighAnn asked about the cost and the ‘return on investment.’ She said that faculty would like to be consulted about these expenditures, and we usually don’t really know what’s happening with the purchases and what we need to do with them. She asked if EMSA would be willing to give reports on how the purchases are working out, what faculty could do to get more out of the purchase, etc. She also said that faculty have trouble backing something when we know nothing about it. Dr. Young said that he is more than happy to do a presentation on how Slate works. He said that it adapts to targeted marketing much better than Banner and helps us to get students from inquiry to admission to matriculation. He said that we admit a lot more students than matriculate, so we don’t really want to put all of that in Banner, which creates a permanent record. Banner Recruit is less nimble than Slate. Jeff Pietruszynski asked about redundancy, since Slate, Banner, Achieve all have aspects for communicating with students. Slate may be the ‘five-star’ product, but he asked whether it is it working for us better than the ‘3-star’ product. Dr. Young said that EMSA has improved its function and is working to make it better. Eric Jackson noted that there needs to be training, so that we know how Slate works. LeighAnn said that we are trying to look at whether there’s something better that costs less. Dr. Lee said that the Banner product would cost about as much and would not work as well. He said that we now have people who know how to use Slate. It would be a problem to have to learn a whole new product. Data driven communication with admitted student can help with ‘conversion.’ He said that we need things outside of software, such as better marketing information and materials and updated brochures for programs. He noted that all our competitors have something like Slate. He said that another area where more information would help with enrollment is why students leave, because retention is part of enrollment. Dr. Young said that he will work on presenting us what we need to know about Slate. Dr. Young said that Kanawha County actually has no demographic cliff (the number of high school graduates is actually going up), but we need to improve conversion and retention rates. He said that we need to limit the number of students who need extra support to a number we can actually support, but it helps in doing that if we have other, better prepared students who are enrolling. We also need a marketing program for various kind of non-traditional students. Barbara brought up building relationships with high schools and going after ‘2nd quartile’ students, as well as EE students. Dr. Young said that it can be difficulty to schedule school visits. He also said that we should go after EE students who aren’t going to college anywhere (about 1/3 of them). We need to give them a reason to come here beyond the ‘price point.’ Dr. Young will try to present something to us in May. LeighAnn asked about doing that presentation at the General Faculty Meeting. Dr. Young asked about how we promote student persistence. Jeff said the Criterion 3 report to HLC reports that. LeighAnn will gather information on what we want to know about Slate. Jeff thanked President Cage, Justin McAllister, and Dr. Young for responding to faculty concerns at the end of a long three days (town halls, BOG, Senate).
			4. Provost Deborah Williams reminded us that POAs due Monday by noon and that these reports have a direct impact on student financial aid and timely operations in certain offices on campus. She said that we are looking at curriculum holistically this semester and next for whole campus, as well as at the schedule of classes/class times to make it easier for students to get the courses they need without overlaps between courses, in the modality they need. She said that there are dominant times, but there are too many different increments. In revising the class timeslots, she said that the Deans Council started with what is needed for 3- and 4-credit courses (which are most dominant). She then turned it over to Kerri Steele to explain. Kerri said that the main point is to make it so that the start times are more set/limited. Whichever option, of three ‘finalists,’ it’s up to departments to schedule things so that it’s not all between 11 and 3-ish. Barbara asked about plusses and minuses among options. Kerri said that #1 is about what we have now with less irregularity; #2 starts later but loses a slot on Tuesday-Thursday morning; #3 has a lunch break every day, even Fridays, but it loses a slot. The Provost said that the decision will be made next week (week of Feb. 10), but departments should be able to start working on schedules before the timeslots are finalized. She said that we need to figure out courses with big time blocks (e.g., lab & studio classes) first. LeighAnn said that wait-lists would help us avoid too many sections. Barbara said that giving the first-year advising office information for each major about what students need to get their first year would be helpful. Mark Wilson asked about a night slot and whether we still need it. Kerri said that the slot is mostly for master’s students. Ginta mentioned that students need to know which courses are not offered every year/semester. Course rotations that we publicize would be helpful, so that students know when they need to take a course when the opportunity presents itself. Kerri said that the first step is to get the courses started at the same time. LeighAnn asked about changing the abbreviation in Banner for Tuesday-Thursday class, since “TR” confuses some new students almost every semester (some think that “TR” stans for Thursday and don’t show up till the second class day) Roy Simmons said that Banner can’t readily do anything other than “TR” for Tuesdays and Thursdays, but LeighAnn will ask Keith if he can write some code to let it do it. The Provost asked that we give our feedback on the schedule soon, since the decision will be made next week.

Reports:

1. BOG Faculty Rep Jeff Pietruszynski reported that the English, Biology, and Biotech program reviews were all approved for continuation at the same level. Jeff said that he has been trying to help the BOG understand that program contributions to University go beyond $ brought in. He said that he thinks that most BOG members did a better job at listening to concerns than in recent years. He said that after the listening sessions the BOG wanted to know the very next day ways that many of the concerns are being/will be addressed. The University can’t pay us more, but he said that we should tell them what else could help (like communication & transparency). Jeff has seen better transparency than in previous administrations, but there have been some break downs in communication. Jeff’s emails don’t go unanswered, so he urged faculty to let him know of concerns. He noted that Ohio State was sued over mold issues. He commented on the new process/form for program review. Now here is a report that needs to be done every year, but full program review is still a five-year thing. Mickey Blackwell raised concerns about a BOG member’s statement that they would not accept anonymous complaints and raised concerns about that undermining ‘open communication.’ Jeff said that those who want to remain anonymous can share concerns with Jeff. He said that perhaps the BOG should ask President & cabinet to leave listening sessions. He said that the alumni governors are very dedicated to making WVSU better. He said that the BOG did discuss how to support DEI while staying in ‘compliance.’ They are working on how to address the issue, but they can’t vote on anything that is not on the published agenda. Ginta asked about whether there’s any more from BOG than ‘we appreciate you.’ Jeff said that so far there are no concrete ideas on improving faculty morale, but there is some response on equipment, etc. One board member would like to work with Jeff and some faculty on ideas for how to help. Edward Lomax asked about ‘on-boarding’ for new BOG members. Jeff has explained about tenure, how faculty are maxing out salary potential at ~45, etc., but there is lots BOG turnover. Barbara commented that HEPC is supposed to offer BOG training, but Jeff said that such training is minimal. He asked the idea of having a BOG handbook for on-boarding. The report was approved with Jessica making the motion and Lena seconded.
2. ACF: Barbara reported that the legislative session is February 12 – April 12, 2025. Governor Morrisey’s Executive Order about DEI (and orders about other matters) can be found at this link: <https://governor.wv.gov/executive-orders>. The House of Delegates new Committee structure and Chairs can be found at the end of these minutes.
We had a report on library issues. WV Electronic Resources currently includes all 2-year and 4-year state institutions and some private colleges in WV. It provides access to LexisNexis, many EBSCO journals and other resources to all institutions. Costs are split among member institutions according to FTE. The 4-year colleges also have Academic Search, Education Source, ERIC, Literary Reference Center, Medline, SPORTDiscus, and others. Costs are split among member institutions. WVER will join with the Pennsylvania consortium, PALCi (Partnership for Academic Library Collaboration and Innovation), which will bring more access and cost savings, Rapid ILL (digital items in hours), and EZ-borrow (physical items in days). HB4654 (to remove exemptions from criminal penalties for making obscenity available to minors) was introduced last year, and is expected to come back in some form. If it is approved as proposed last year, it would remove immunity from libraries exposing minors to obscenity. This could affect university libraries, with minors on campus. Colleges will need to determine the best ways to exclude minors from certain library materials, or obtain advanced consent from parents/guardians. Bluefield State is asking for advanced consent for minors who may be exposed to potentially offensive material in their classes.
Legislative updates: Travis Mollohan said that DEI legislation moved through legislature last year, but failed to pass before the deadline. It is expected to come back this year. There is concern that such a bill may impact teaching. Governor Morissey issued an executive order requiring all state agencies to review DEI offices and policies. HEPC has asked institutions to determine what is required for compliance with title IX, accreditation, grant funding, etc., as well as report any DEI activities on their campuses. The executive order prohibits preferential treatment based on race, sex, sexual orientation, etc., and would prohibit funding for DEI activities. More clarification is hoped for/expected.
A settlement with the NCAA is in progress, and there will be changes to college athletics. WVU and Marshall want policy changes that allow them to take advantage of the new name/image/likeness and financial rules in the NCAA. PEIA funding is an ongoing concern, but it’s too early to forecast anything. There is a bill in process to support campus police with better pension options. It would allow them to use the State Police plan.
HEPC is defining a 60+60 transfer package that will have specific impacts on 2-year colleges. It will define uniform “general education” and transfer programs. Dual enrollment continues to grow in popularity and enrollment. We have about 6500 enrollments each semester. Course sharing (where one institutions offer a course online that students at institutions can enroll) is still a point of emphasis, but the pilot course on autism is seeing lower enrollment than expected. HEPC planning for more general sciences, starting with a chemistry course in the fall ’25 semester. Round 9 of OER grant applications will be announced soon. There will be a micro-credentials workshop February 27-28. HEPC is encouraging micro-credentials and hopes that all institutions will offer them by fall ’26.
ACF has subcommittees looking into faculty compensation. WVUP’s faculty senate adopted a resolution requesting annual updates to the pay scale, even when raises are not possible. This keeps pay differences on record, which can help promote pay equity, at least when money for raises is available, and it might motivate institutions to address disparities. A subcommittee on faculty evaluation is consolidating 1-page evaluation summaries of all institutions collected at the retreat in November. Report approved, with Jessica making the motion and Lena seconding.

4. Cultural Activities & Educational Assemblies reported. Sue & Jessica are the co-chairs. They meet once a month, mostly on Zoom. A film about Chevalier with post film discussion was held. The play “Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind” was offered. Josh Martin is working on gallery improvements in the Davis Fine Arts Building. Step Africa will perform on Feb. 18. On Feb. 14, there will be a Frederick Douglass birthday cake bake-off; there is a link online to register. President Cage and/or the 1st lady will judge. Jefe made flyer, which will be posted on social media. A fire-side chat with Kalay Young is planned, but the committee is still nailing down the date; she will explain some stuff about legislature changes. The spring 2025 production will be a musical: “Twenty-Fifth Putnam County Spelling Bee.” Auditions are scheduled for February 13, 5-8 pm. The report was approved. Mickey made the motion, and Ginta seconded.

5. EPC: There were no proposals. New proposals for next month must be in by Feb. 20.

6. Library: ProQuest funding has been approved, and the PO is ‘done.’ The report was approved, with Jessica making the motion, and Ginta seconded

7. Program Review: Mike Anderson reported that the program review committee looked at English & Biology (Biotech is considered by the graduate council). The program committee will look at Communications when they get report. The report was approved with Jessica making the motion and Ginta seconding.

**Old Business/Updates**

1. Focus of the Senate – 2024-25

* + 1. LeighAnn announced progress on the Directory, classroom technology, and a new template for the class schedule.
		2. Faculty Lecture Series: Jessica will send out the Faculty Lecture Series schedule.
		3. TurnitIn Add On for AI: the invoice has been paid; Tom Kiddie is working on training for it, possibly online at first. The date will be sent out.
		4. ProQuest: funding was approved, and the purchase order is “done.”
		5. WVSU Online Directory has a link, but corrections are underway: https://wvstateu.edu/university-directory/
		6. Facility Services – Updates are being made; faculty should send any other issues to LeighAnn. This is the deferred maintenance website link: <https://sites.google.com/wvstateu.edu/wvsudeferredmaintenance/home>.

**New Business**

1. Future State Committee is comparing what NCUBO’s report says in relation to what the Future State Committee is recommending.
2. Retool Your School – LeighAnn will let us know when we can start voting. Proposals are due Feb. 26, so voting should start soon after that. We need an all-hands-on-deck push to win. We’ve done it before. The proposal has to be with materials that can be purchased at/through Home Depot, and it needs to be something we can do with our
3. DEI: Mickey proposed that the Senate vote its support of diversity, equity, and inclusion. He asked for votes that we support each concept, with a careful statement created afterwards for another vote.
Mickey and Jessica moved and seconded three separate votes of approval for diversity, equity, and inclusion. All were approved unanimously.

Mickey, Jessica, LeighAnn, and anyone else who is interested will come up with a formal statement.

Mickey raised idea of having informal conversations about what we can do. He asked that people contact him to discuss and come up with things to do about issues where we agree, such as writing articles. If more than one person shows up, he will take a vow of silence.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm with a motion from JB and a second by Lena.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Ladner