



**ADVISORY COUNCIL OF FACULTY
Meeting Minutes – July 12-14, 2019
Location: Chief Logan State Park, Logan, WV**

#	STATUS			NAME	INSTITUTION
	Present	Phone	Regrets		
1	X			Mike Lilly	Bluefield State College
2	X			Todd Johnson	Blue Ridge CTC
3	X			Mike Ditchen, <i>Webmaster</i>	Bridge Valley CTC
4			X	Joseph Allen	Concord University
5			X	Shirley Murphy	Eastern WV CTC
6			X	Harry Baxter, <i>Legislative Coordinator</i>	Fairmont State University
7	X			Kevin Evans	Glenville State College
8	X			Amine Oudghiri-Otmani (replaced outgoing ACF Chair Marybeth Beller)	Marshall University
9	X			Katie Hopkins	Mountwest CTC
10			X	Karen Carter	New River CTC
11	X			Amy Cunningham, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Pierpont CTC
12	X			Nicklaus Goff (alt. for Tom Sydow)	Potomac State College of WVU
13	X			Max Guirguis, <i>Secretary/Treasurer</i>	Shepherd University
14	X			Charles Puckett	Southern WV CTC
15	X			Sylvia Senften	West Liberty University
16	X			Mark Goldstein	WV Northern Community College
17	X			Cici McLay	WV School of Osteopathic Med.
18	X			Barbara Ladner	WV State University
19	X			Dave Hauser (alt. for Roy Nutter)	West Virginia University
20			X	Gary Thompson	WVU at Parkersburg
21	X			Asad Davari	WVU Institute of Tech.
				GUESTS	
				Corley Dennison	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, HEPC
	Present	Phone	Regrets		

ACF Vice-Chair Amy Cunningham called the meeting to order at 1:20 PM. (ACF Chair Marybeth Beller could not attend due to a last-minute family obligation.)

1. The minutes for the meeting of June 13, 2019 were unanimously approved as circulated.

2. ACF representatives reviewed a draft letter addressed to Michael Farrell, Chair of the Collaboration Subcommittee of the Blue Ribbon Commission, asking him to open up the collaboration report of November 2018 for more institutional data. Discussion ensued and consensus was not to send the letter to Chairman Farrell but to ask Chancellor Sarah Tucker to publicize the collaboration data available to the HEPC. This is a potentially more productive approach since the BRC has lapsed into an inactive state and may not convene again.

3. The ACF is concerned about the prospect of FACDIS running out of funds by the end of this year. Unless WVU restores funding to FACDIS, the Fall 2020 workshops could be the final FACDIS-sponsored event. Dr. Corley Dennison, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the HEPC, reported that Dr. Sophie Peterson, a founding member of FACDIS, will meet shortly with WVU Provost Maryanne Reed in an attempt to find a workable solution. Stressing the HEPC's commitment to the internationalization of education in West Virginia, Dr. Dennison said that the Commission would work with state agencies to find a replacement for FACDIS if it ceased operating.

4. The proposal to merge Pierpont Community & Technical College with Fairmont State University proposal did not move forward. Pierpont CTC employees are gratified by this development.

5. There was some discussion of the increased use of "instructional specialists" at CTCs. A number of ACF members from the two-year system expressed a concern that instructional specialists are being classified as faculty, even when they are assigned one course to teach alongside their administrative duties. A larger

concern is that some instructional specialists are lacking in the credentials and professional training needed for teaching.

6. Of the 16 higher learning institutions represented at the retreat, 13 will give faculty pay raises in the 2019-2020 academic year. While any pay raise is certainly better than none, faculty are hoping for more regular and more sizable increases in their salaries to make up for the dearth of pay raises during the last economic downturn.

7. Dr. Corley Dennison provided the following brief update:

- ❑ Plans to form a new “Library Consortium” are well underway. This can result in significant savings to all public two- and four-year institutions. The Library Commission will act as a fiscal agent for the receipt and expenditure of institutional funds. The cost to individual institutions will be based on FTE student count. The HEPC is in the process of developing a congress to look at the available database options and the subscription prices.
- ❑ The HEPC will sponsor an advising workshop on developmental education in September 2019. A major theme of the workshop is reaching out to adult learners, who are perceived as a viable recruitment source in an era of declining college enrollment. The rising tuition costs and the drop in international student numbers have combined to exacerbate this national phenomenon. Institutions are encouraged to offer evening classes to serve the needs of this student population.
- ❑ In an effort to make higher education more affordable and reduce student debt, the HEPC is launching a new initiative to promote the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) across the state. The HEPC might suggest metrics and goals for institutions to reach in terms of the percentage of courses that are utilizing OER. While several states have adopted legislative mandates requiring OER use, no similar plans are being considered in West Virginia. When asked about his thoughts on this

emerging trend, Dr. Dennison assured the ACF that no such mandate would come from the HEPC.

- ❑ The newly published WV Higher Education Report Card shows notable improvements in the pass rates for college-level math and English. Since 2012, pass rates for college-level math and English at four-year institutions have increased by 39 and 16.4 percent, respectively. For the same time period, college-level math and English pass rates at two-year institutions have increased by 32 and 20.2 percent, respectively.
- ❑ Now that the state economy is rebounding, the legislature may request input from higher learning institutions before the beginning of the next legislative session. The input will help legislators and policymakers assess the needs across the state.
- ❑ With 2020 being an election year, the “campus carry” bill that got stuck in the Senate this year might not be reintroduced in the next legislative session. It is more likely to be introduced after the election to improve chances of its passage.
- ❑ There are no plans to hire a permanent Chancellor for the HEPC any time soon. This is no cause for worry because the interim chancellor, Dr. Sarah Tucker, is doing an excellent job, especially in dealing with the state legislature.

8. Mark Goldstein announced his stepping down as WV Great Teachers Seminar coordinator due to his impending retirement. Mike Ditchen volunteered to take over the task of running the GTS. ACF members thanked and lauded Mark Goldstein for his exemplary leadership of the GTS over the past 27 years.

9. A discussion of Public Employees Insurance Agency (PEIA) and the quality of service it offers led to a consensus that state employees should have access to more healthcare choices and affordable options. Several ACF members noted that it is often difficult to obtain coverage for out-of-state procedures. Others contended that many of the problems associated with the insurance coverage stem from the fact that PEIA is a for-profit operation. A possible solution is for

the state to contract with a reputable nonprofit provider instead of or in addition to PEIA.

10. There was some discussion of termination and grievance policies. Two main concerns were expressed:

i. Some of the institutional termination policies are vague and subject to different interpretation and arbitrary enforcement. In some cases, violations that serve as possible grounds for termination are not clearly defined.

ii. The current grievance process in many institutions does not follow the best practices in higher education in that it lacks not only legal representation and counseling services, but also mediation and arbitration mechanisms. This is particularly poignant considering the adversarial nature of the process and the serious consequences that are often at stake.

In response to these concerns, the ACF has made it a priority in the next academic year to focus on improving the fairness of employment policies and strengthening the due process protections of faculty and staff.

11. After an extended discussion, the following issues were identified as the ACF's top priorities for 2019-2020 academic year:

i. Increase funding for higher education to prepare our students for the dynamic needs of West Virginia.

ii. Fully fund PEIA and explore alternatives to meet the needs of state employees for affordable and accessible healthcare.

iii. Include faculty representation in higher education planning and decision making.

iv. Ensure transparent, fair, and equitable employment processes for higher education faculty and staff.

v. Preserve the autonomy of Boards of Governors to regulate the safety and security of their campuses.

12. The following officers were elected by acclamation to one-year terms:

- ☐ ACF Chair – Amy Cunningham (Pierpont CTC)

- ❑ ACF Vice-Chair – Joseph Allen* (Concord University)
- ❑ Legislative Liaison – Harry Baxter* (Fairmont State University)
- ❑ Secretary and Treasurer – Max Guirguis (Shepherd University)
- ❑ Webmaster – Mike Ditchen (Bridge Valley CTC)

* Elected in absentia

13. ACF will meet on the following dates in the 2019-2020 academic year:

- ❑ Friday, September 27, 2019 at 1 PM (Charleston, HEPC Building, 9th Fl)
- ❑ Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 1 PM (Charleston, HEPC Building, 9th Fl)
- ❑ Friday, December 13, 2019 at 1 PM (Charleston, HEPC Building, 9th Fl)
- ❑ Friday, April 17, 2020 at 1 PM (Fairmont, Advanced Technology Center of Pierpont CTC)
- ❑ Friday, June 26, 2020 at 1 PM (Charleston, HEPC Building, 9th Fl)

The dates of the January and/or February 2020 meetings will be determined depending on the date of Higher Education Day.

14. There was some discussion of potential venues for next year's retreat. The shortlist includes Oglebay Resort and Conference Center, Blennerhassett Island Historical State Park, and Cacapon Resort State Park. The newly elected ACF chair, Amy Cunningham, will call to check the best rates and packages available.

15. Meeting with Senator Robert Beach (D – Monongalia)

The ACF invited several legislators to its annual retreat but only Sen. Robert Beach was able to attend. Amy Cunningham presented him with the list of issues that the ACF had developed during the retreat to use as discussion points. The following is a summary of his comments:

- ❑ Though state funding of higher education has dropped over the past ten years, there is currently more support than opposition for improving the funding, as the fiscal outlook is more favorable now than in recent years.
- ❑ It is uncertain what will become of the Blue Ribbon Commission and the funding formula that was proposed last year but has not yet been enacted into law.

- ❑ The legislature is committed to finding a permanent solution to funding the healthcare system of state employees. There is fear that WVU, which contributes about \$30 million a year to PEIA, might try to opt out of the system. That would undoubtedly add to the challenges of fixing PEIA.
- ❑ Institutions need to keep an open line of communication with key legislators, and committee chairs. Whether it be funding, health insurance, or campus safety issues, institutions are encouraged to make their needs and concerns known to their elected representatives. Letters always receive more attention than emails. Person-to-person visits are even more effective. Inviting local legislators to special events or meetings can also make a difference. Attending critical committee hearings and speaking out is another important strategy. At one particular hearing, there was merely a single person representing one institution among many lobbyists representing the other side. If institutions want to have their views recognized and prioritized, they ought to be more organized and vocal in articulating them.

16. ACF representatives were tasked with collecting data on the average debt load of graduating students at their institutions. This information can come in handy when petitioning legislators to increase the education budget, as lower funding leads to tuition hikes that contribute to student debt.

Respectfully submitted,

Max Guirguis, PhD
Professor of Political Science
Co-Chair, Department of Political Science & Global Studies
Shepherd University
Shepherdstown, WV