



**ADVISORY COUNCIL OF FACULTY**  
**Meeting Minutes and Report – Monday, January 28, 2019**  
**Location: Lew McManus Conference Room, Building One,**  
**Capitol Complex Charleston, WV**

#	STATUS			NAME	INSTITUTION
1	X			Mike Lilly	Bluefield State College
2	X			Katherine Cox	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			Marybeth Beller, <i>Chair</i>	Marshall University
9			X	Elliot Parker	Mountwest CTC
10	X			Karen Carter	New River CTC
11	X			Amy Cunningham, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Pierpont CTC
12			X	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	Karen Wines	WV School of Osteopathic Medicine
18	X			Barbara Ladner	WV State University
19	X			Roy Nutter	West Virginia University
20	X			Gary Thompson	WVU at Parkersburg
21	X			Asad Davari	WVU Institute of Technology
				<b>GUESTS</b>	
				Corley Dennison	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
	Present	Phone	Regrets		

The Advisory Council of Faculty (ACF) convened at the State Capitol on January 28, 2019, in keeping with the annual tradition of soliciting legislative support for its causes on Higher Education Day. ACF Legislative Coordinator, Harry Baxter, set up appointments in advance with several key legislators and committee chairs.

There were a couple of last-minute cancellations and schedule changes due to unanticipated delays or urgent matters that required immediate attention. ACF representatives ended up meeting with the following legislators:

- ❑ Delegate Eric Householder, Chair of the House Finance Committee
- ❑ Delegate Paul Espinosa, House Majority Whip
- ❑ Delegate Danny Hamrick, Chair of the House Education Committee
- ❑ Senator Mitch Carmichael, Senate President, and Senator Craig Blair, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee

ACF representatives used the occasion to talk about a number of issues that are pertinent to the group's goals and vital to higher education in West Virginia. Below are the five concerns relayed to the legislators followed by the gist of their response.

The **first** issue was state funding of higher education: The decline in higher education funding in recent years has put enormous pressure on public learning institutions, which continue to operate at bare-bone levels. While the state's economy has been steadily growing, education funding has yet to recover from the recession. A reliable and acceptable way of raising revenue to fund higher education is levying a three-cent tax on soft drinks. SB 365 proposes the redistribution of revenue generated from an excise tax on soft drinks to four-year medical schools. Perhaps this bill can be amended to extend the funding to all higher learning institutions.

Response: There is wide support for developing a comprehensive plan for the sustainable funding of higher education. The Blue Ribbon Commission has yet to finalize its report. Meanwhile, the legislature is actively considering the so-called “Gilbert Plan” (put forth by Marshall University President Jerome Gilbert), which proposes the one-time allocation of an additional \$10 million to regional four-year institutions. The “soda tax” bill is unlikely to move forward because there is no appetite for any tax hikes right now.

The **second** issue was the “5 percent pay raise” that was much less than 5 percent: Though touted as a substantial pay raise for state employees, the 5 percent increase was actually based on the average salary paid from the state’s General Fund. Some public learning institutions had to supplement the money with their own resources to give employees a 4 or 5 percent raise, which further strained their inadequate budgets. Others had no choice but to implement a lower pay raise than what was announced by the governor.

Response: The legislature is aware of the disparity between what was promised and what was delivered, but the revenue surplus has quickly evaporated due to increased spending across a number of sectors. The state may budget more funds for pay raises in the future, depending on economic conditions and competing issues.

The **third** issue was the Campus Self-Defense Act: HB 2519 takes away the autonomy of Boards of Governors to control campus safety. The availability of guns on campus could result in more accidents, injuries, and deaths. It could also have implications for the whole state by potentially hurting the hiring process. Campus police departments and the Council of Presidents oppose HB 2519.

Response: The campus gun bill is a done deal. It has broad support and nothing can stop it from passing. The point here is that this is a matter of constitutional principle. If students who attend public institutions do not check their

constitutional rights at the door, why should their Second Amendment rights be any different? Besides, students who can bring guns to campus under the act are already licensed carriers.

The **fourth** issue was the fate of the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC): As widely reported, the Blue Ribbon Commission is still contemplating significant changes to the HEPC. There is a possibility that the HEPC may be abolished and its functions relegated to the respective Boards of Governors of public institutions. The HEPC is more than just a service agency that offers legal, space planning, and campus design services. It is a coordinating body that provides a full range of academic support services that Boards of Governors are not set up to provide. For instance, the HEPC helps create transfer articulation agreements, conducts research at the national level on student achievement, and collects data from other states about the best practices in education. The “co-requisite model” that drastically reduced dropout rates is a case in point. In sum, the HEPC is indispensable because much of what it does directly affects what we do in the classroom.

Response: While no decision has yet been made on the HEPC, there are no plans to dissolve it. The HEPC may end up being a leaner, more efficient, and more specialized body, but it will unlikely be eliminated. The Blue Ribbon Commission also seems to think that a policy agency of some form is necessary.

The **fifth** issue was the funding of Public Employees Health Insurance program (PEIA): HB 2584 purports to provide additional funding to PEIA when in fact it assesses a tax on higher learning institutions and state agencies in order to create a \$150-million rainy day fund as a permanent fix to PEIA’s insolvency problem. As it is, public colleges and universities are struggling to generate sufficient income. HB 2584 will make a difficult situation worse.

Response: The legislature is aware that the governor's plan does not involve the appropriation of new money to PEIA. It merely shifts the cost and burden of creating a rainy day fund to states agencies. The Senate is totally against it.

Between legislative visits, the ACF held a very short meeting in the Lew McManus Conference room. Much of the meeting was given over to updates by Dr. Corley Dennison, the HEPC's Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. He briefed the ACF on several pending bills that have an impact for higher education:

- ❑ SB 1 (free CTC tuition): This bill provides free in-state tuition at community and technical colleges for WV residents. Last year, a similar bill passed the Senate and stalled in the House, but this bill will probably pass both houses.
- ❑ SB 25 (elimination of tenure): This bill authorizes the governing boards of public colleges and universities to eliminate faculty tenure.
- ❑ SB 386 (PEIA funding): This bill prescribes a formula to be used by the state for taking money from government agencies and public learning institutions to build a rainy day fund for PEIA.
- ❑ HB 2034 (Private education and home-schooling): This bill prohibits higher learning institutions from discriminating against graduates of private schools and home education by requiring them to submit to alternative testing as a precondition for acceptance. There is also an omnibus K-12 bill in the works that would provide vouchers to private and home school students.

Respectfully submitted,

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