



**Meeting Report/Minutes**  
**Date: November 4-5, 2022**  
**Retreat, Pipestem State Park & Resort**

**Date: January 27, 2023**  
**Time: 1:00 PM – via Zoom**

#	STATUS		NAME	INSTITUTION
	Present	Zoom		
1	X		Amine Oudghiri-Otmani	Marshall University
2	X		Asad Davari	WVU Institute of Tech.
3	X		Barbara Ladner, <b><u>Webmaster</u></b>	WV State University
4	X		Raymond Alvarez	Fairmont State University
5	X		Chris Ward	Southern WV CTC
6	X		Jeremy Larance	West Liberty University
7	X		Eloise Elliott	West Virginia University
8	X		Heather Hussell	Mountwest CTC
9	X		Holley Ralston	Blue Ridge CTC
10	X		Joel Farkas, <b><u>Chair</u></b>	WVU at Parkersburg
11	X		Joseph Allen, <b><u>Legislative Coordinator</u></b>	Concord University
12	X		Karen Berneburg, <b><u>Vice-Chair</u></b>	New River CTC
13	X		Kathy Herrington	WV Northern Community College
14			Kristie Bridges	WV School of Osteopathic Med.

15	X		Kristen Tunno-Mullins	Glenville State College
16	X		Max Guirguis,	Shepherd University
17			Mike Lilly	Bluefield State College
18	X		Natalie Sypolt	Pierpont CTC
19			Shirley Murphy	Eastern WV CTC
20		X	Lana Andrian, <i><b>Secretary</b></i>	Bridge Valley CTC
21	X		Tom Sydow	Potomac State College of WVU
22		x	Randall Brumfield	HEPC

ACF Retreat Report/Minutes  
November 2022

The Advisory Council of Faculty (ACF) held its annual retreat at Pipestem State Park in the first week of this month. Below is a summary of the presentations and discussions that took place during the two-day retreat.

1) Dr. Clark Egnor, Coordinator of International Programs for the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC), joined the opening session by Zoom to share some updates regarding the current internationalization efforts and trajectories in the state. Dr. Egnor touted the expansion of the J-1 Exchange Visitor Program that provides foreign nationals with the opportunity to teach, conduct research, study, or receive training, at any of the six consortium institutions: Bluefield State University, Concord University, Fairmont State University, Glenville State University, Shepherd University, and West Liberty University. Partnering with member campuses, the HEPC Office of International Programs (OIP) aims to promote the sponsorship of visiting professors, scholars, and students on J-1 visa, in keeping with its mission of “fostering statewide involvement in international education initiatives.”

Another important international education consortium is Global West Virginia, which was recently created by the HEPC using a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Global WV is dedicated to enhancing the internationalization of undergraduate education in West Virginia by developing new ways to strengthen the international dimension of academic programs, creating new pathways to international experiential learning for students, and improving the foreign language proficiency of students. At present, there are only two institutions participating in this new initiative: West Virginia State University and Bluefield State University. The outlook is to expand the consortium to include more West Virginia institutions and academic disciplines.

In closing, Dr. Egnor reiterated his support for the ACF-led push for legislation to attract more international students to West Virginia. With the number of high school graduates declining statewide and employers seeking to hire workers with global competence, now is a particularly opportune time to advocate for a “Postsecondary Globalization Bill.”

2) Dr. Randall Brumfield, the HEPC’s Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, attended two sessions in which he provided some updates on the work of the HEPC and its plans for the next legislative session. Following up on Dr. Egnor’s presentation, Dr. Brumfield reaffirmed the commitment of the HEPC to internationalizing higher education and making West Virginia a popular destination for anyone seeking to study in the United States. The strategies that the HEPC is currently pursuing include increasing the international content of degree programs, promoting international cooperative research projects, expanding institutional membership in internationalization-related initiatives, facilitating student and faculty exchanges through study abroad programs, and developing a “virtual exchange” experience whereby American students can engage in online intercultural interaction with their international peers without physical travel.

Looking ahead to next year, Dr. Brumfield laid out the top four priorities of the HEPC. The first is to increase the retention rate of adult learners. While adult learners tend to be highly motivated and engaged, they are usually pressed for time and have more complex responsibilities than their traditional counterparts. Institutions need to experiment with new and better ways to accommodate the lifestyles and needs of this cohort without sacrificing academic rigor. Proven strategies include offering courses in multiple formats, providing assistive technology support for remote learning, and broadening scheduling options to include evening, weekend, and accelerated classes.

The second priority is to support the health & mental health of students, faculty, & staff. As the mental health needs of students increased during the pandemic, collegiate counseling services were strained to capacity and beyond. The issue of inadequate access to mental health care has been on the radar of some institutions even before the pandemic, but it now needs to be addressed in a more robust and sustained manner and we discussed whether to in this initiative. The HEPC, the Council of Presidents, and the political leadership in Charleston recognize the importance of investing in professional mental health services. It remains to be determined whether these student support (or college-wide) resources will be provided directly by the institutions or through a third party.

The third priority is to monitor the financial health of degree-granting private institutions. The recent bankruptcy of Ohio Valley University and the ongoing financial crisis at Wheeling University demonstrate the need for increased accountability and closer state monitoring to protect students against potential disruptions to their educational plans. Under current practice, the HEPC may impose additional reporting requirements on institutions that show signs of financial hardship to ensure their continued financial viability. Institutions that fail to follow through on agreed-upon actions may be subject to a range of sanctions, including limiting new enrollment, withholding reauthorization, and suspending the conferring of degrees until compliance is met. The HEPC is in the process of preparing a “Reauthorization Rules Bill” that would codify the reporting

requirements for private institutions and the possible sanctions for noncompliance.

The fourth priority is to establish credentialing requirements for dual credit instructors. Nowadays, many high school students are taking dual credit courses to shorten their time in college and save tuition dollars. These high school courses are supposed to match introductory-level college courses in terms of content and rigor. However, in absence of uniform standards across the state, some school districts have been assigning dual credit courses to instructors who do not possess the requisite academic training and competence. As a result, dual credit courses are not always demanding or challenging enough to be on par with college freshman courses. This is evident in the fact that incoming students are failing science and math courses in large numbers, even when they have one year's worth of coursework in these subject areas. The HEPC wants to work with the state Department of Education on developing some qualification standards and assessments for high-school instructors who teach dual credit courses.

Following the election of officers, ACF members set out to identify and develop agenda ideas for the upcoming legislative session. A discussion ensued regarding the relevance of last year's issues and the wisdom of presenting legislators with a long list of priorities. Some of the brainstorming conversations also reflected on concerns, challenges, strategies, and opportunities related to higher education. A consensus emerged that perhaps a more effective advocacy approach would be to develop a more focused agenda with a limited number of issues around which support can be garnered.

The group eventually settled on three priority areas it believes will resonate with legislators on both sides of the political aisle, to make it easier to adapt our work to what is happening in the Legislature this session. These are campus health and safety, student success, and economic development. To support these areas,

members divided into four working subgroups on: 1) Promoting student mental health and safety, 2) Student success and retention, including meeting the broadband and technology needs of higher education, and establishing dual credit credentialing requirements 3) Economic development and financial health for colleges, especially private institutions, and 4) Introducing a new internationalization bill to retain global talent in WV (to encompass students, faculty, staff, and business leaders). These groups plan to discuss in preparation for the next ACF meeting, which is scheduled for late January 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Max Guirguis, PhD  
Professor of Political Science  
Shepherd University  
Shepherdstown, WV