

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

September 11, 2008

Higher Education Policy Commission

I was joined last month by Shepherd University Board of Governors members Doris Griffin, Dr. Anders Henriksson, and Diane Shewbridge, along with staff members Alan Perdue and Shelli Dronsfield at the Board of Governors' Summit sponsored by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.

Some of the key insights we as a group brought back from the meeting included:

- With only 16 of every 100 West Virginia ninth-graders eventually graduating from college, there is a significant need for finding ways to increase university enrollment and retention as well as marketing the message that education is valued and valuable.
- It was instructive to exchange ideas with people from other institutions. Shepherd is in many ways unique, but there are areas where collaboration in problem-solving may be useful.
- The importance of attending to the budget process as it represents the operating and planning document for the University. If the program, initiative, etc. is not in the budget it will not happen.
- University Boards need to act faster than they do now, more like the pace of businesses.
- Institutions may want to look at being flexible in the scheduling of General Education courses. Allow students to take major elective courses earlier, e.g., freshman or sophomore years in high school. Conference attendees said this may increase interest in students staying in college, and reduce the dropout rate.
- Transparency is ALWAYS the best policy. When issues arise, boards should swiftly present the facts to the public and state the actions to be taken to remedy the situation. An attempt to suppress information always fails, makes matters worse, and sheds a bad light on the institution.
- Adjuncts are extremely valuable financially and educationally to institutions when teaching classes where their expertise exceeds that of full-time faculty due to the fact that they are actively working and current in their specialization.

I participated in the opening plenary along with HEPC Vice Chairman David Hendrickson, West Virginia State Senator Robert Plymale, and Sharon Rowe, Chairwoman of the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine's Board of Governors. My remarks are included at the end of this report.

Staffing

- With the beginning of the academic year, we welcomed new faculty and staff members to the Shepherd University community, including several key academic administration appointments: Dr. Russell Porter, Dean of Graduate Studies and Continuing Education, Dr. Ann Legreid, Dean of the

School of Business and Social Sciences, and Dr. Sharon Mailey, Chair of the Nursing Education Department.

Capital Projects

- **Wellness Center:** Structural steel and masonry installation continue to dominate construction activity. The utility duct bank is complete, and excavation of the road bed, mechanical rough-ins, roofing, door frames, interior walls, sprinkler systems, structural steel and storm water systems continue.

Athletics

- The Shepherd Rams Football team was on the road for its first game of the season, and is off to another successful beginning, having opened the season with a dramatic come-from-behind victory over Shippensburg. The Volleyball and Soccer teams have also begun their season play.

Campus Life

- The New Student Day of Service on August 13th had 165 students participating in service projects throughout the local area, and was followed by new student residential move-in on August 14th.
- Filmmaker Brent Scarpo was on campus August 21st for the showing of his film, “Journey to a Hate-Free Millennium”, followed by discussion.
- The first Late Night in the Zone of the academic year was held August 22nd with 350 students attending.
- Screenings of the film “Persepolis”, which is the book being read as part of the New Student Common Reading Experience, were held August 22nd-26th.

Other events held as part of the beginning of the academic year were:

August 15	Convocation
August 27	Student Organization Fair on the Midway
August 28	Free Film, “Long Shot”, at the Berkeley Theater with free transportation
September 2	Commuter Reach-Out
September 3	Laser Tag in Scarborough Library
September 6	Student Leadership Conference
September 7	Social Greek Fall Recruitment Period Begins

Office of Advancement

- **Shepherd University Philanthropy Report for FY’08:** YTD June 30, 2008 – \$2,833,462 raised.
 - This year-end total for FY 2008 reflects an additional \$758,169 over the annual collected for FY 2007 of \$2,075,293.

- An increase of \$546,939 in student endowment donations contributed significantly to the overall increase.
 - The Field Turf Project brought in an additional \$15,580, closing out at \$171,945.
- **Shepherd University Comprehensive Campaign Report:** Cumulative through June 30, 2008 - \$5,438,706.
- Reflects an increase of just over \$405,000 in new gifts to the Campaign since March 31, 2008.
 - This report also includes CATF Annual Giving and new pledges made in the same period.
 - This total reflects 28.62% of the Campaign Goal.
- **Recent events:**
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| June 5 | Alumni Association Budget Meeting |
| June 9 | Alumni Association Annual Meeting |
| June 13 | Football Golf Tournament |
| June 17 | Hall of Fame Committee Meeting |
| June 25 | SUAA Membership Drive Mailing |
| July 11 | CATF Opening night |
| July 12 | CATF Dinner at Popodicon |
| July 16 and 26 | CATF Play Invitation, CCA Tours and Reception |
| August 12 | Hall of Fame Committee Meeting |
| August 18 | Men's Basketball Golf Tournament |
| August 25 | Campaign Executive Committee Meeting |
| August 27 | Dinner on the Diamond |
| September 6 | Ram Gridiron Club Day |
| September 6 | FieldTurf™ recognition at first home football game |
| September 8 | Alumni Association Board Meeting |
| September 10 | Campaign Steering Committee Meeting |

Board of Governors Meeting Dates

- **Thursday, November 13 Board Meeting**
- **Thursday, January 8 Board Meeting**
- **Thursday, April 16 Board Meeting**
- **Thursday, June 11 Board Meeting**

Upcoming Events:

September 17	Tom E. Moses Constitution Day Lecture by Donald A. Ritchie
September 19	Hall of Fame Banquet
October 1	Scarborough Society Lecture and Award Ceremony
October 10	Alumni Association Board Meeting
October 12	Campaign Leadership Gifts Committee Meeting
October 17	Alumni Association Golf Tournament
October 13-19	Homecoming Week

For other events, check our home page calendar

<http://www.shepherd.edu/planweb/events/>

**Remarks presented by Dr. Suzanne Shipley at the
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission's
Board of Governors Summit
August 22, 2008**

Response to the Questions:

How does your respective organizations contribute to improving access to quality higher education in West Virginia? In what ways can policy makers, higher education leaders and the business community work together to address barriers to student success in higher education? What are the major issues facing West Virginia and West Virginia education: participation, success, adult learners, school readiness, funding, etc.? What is the common agenda to which all can subscribe?

As public institutions of higher education, we both reflect and shape our state and our country's situation. While today we are focused on issues of **access**, we also struggle with retention and time to degree. So my comments will address not only getting students into our colleges and universities, but also assuring they gain the skills and insights they need. My organizing topics are three: **affordability, preparation, and perspective**.

Affordability: Just as Americans now face shrinking access to home ownership, healthcare, and transportation, access to higher education is endangered. How can we creatively control costs without sacrificing quality, as competition for salaries, facilities and technology increase? If tuitions continue to rise to meet these costs, and state support continues to decrease or remain static, then need-based aid must increase to maintain affordability. Concord University has addressed this challenge admirably, building both need- and merit-based aid. We have much to learn from their model.

New models of affordability can also emerge through unlikely partnerships between universities and employers. Today such collaborative efforts abound to prepare future healthcare providers. Many states have gathered hospital leaders with legislators and educators to map out support structures for workforce development during this time of shortage. Most recently, our neighbor state of Maryland launched an effort to address a nursing crisis by supplying hospital nurse administrators as short-term faculty members. The hospitals knew that without enough teachers, there would not be enough nurses. The universities responded by offering discounted tuitions through contracts for cohorts of nurses in accelerated programs that they designed to be delivered in the workplace during hours close to shift times.

At Shepherd, we are discussing an emerging partnership with WVU to enhance healthcare options in the Eastern Panhandle. Through the nearby location in Martinsburg of the WVU East medical campus, we aim to enhance healthcare in the region first in pharmacy by creating a three plus four degree, the BS from Shepherd and the PharmD from WVU. I appreciate the effort that leaders from WVU have made to link with Shepherd as a public liberal arts magnet for students preparing for professions in pharmacy and look forward to collaboration in this and other health professional fields.

Preparation: Our state is also focused on preparing middle and high school students for future university careers. While a decade ago, we addressed their needs only when they reached our classes, catching students up on missing skills in math, English and science, today's partnerships must start earlier--between professors and school teachers, reaching into high school and middle school classrooms to provide the bridges needed for future success. Our colleagues from Glenville State have started down this path with great promise and I hope we hear more about their model during our time together. I'd also like to thank our Marshall University colleagues for their help in transitioning Shepherd to offer Master's degrees in the teaching fields. Their guidance has been critical to our success.

A previously unforeseen stumbling block to student success has emerged with the safety challenges increasing daily. Only two years ago next weekend, we saw domestic violence move from our neighborhoods to our Shepherd campus, realizing well before the Virginia Tech incident how vulnerable our public spaces have become. The monetary and personal cost of preventive vigilance is critical, of course, but also distracts from resources previously applied to teaching. I hope we can maximize safety resources by sharing lessons learned about risk management across the state.

Perspective: Education, like democracy, is messy. There is not always a direct correlation between effort or dollars invested and measurable results of being educated. Higher education shapes individuals, equipping them to shape our world. It is a beautiful and special process that requires freedom, space and individual attention. The time spent acquiring a college degree is time set aside for our own human development. It is time to freely explore ideas, all ideas, in order to test their fit and our limits. It is a time to think, study, work hard, and emerge an educated person. Pragmatic results, measurable outcomes, and timetables, while valuable, may not always harmonize with this opportunity. Citizens who learn to think clearly and independently will contribute to our society in unimaginably helpful ways, even if we do not see an immediate return on our investment. Universities are and must remain protected places that stimulate discovery, create knowledge, and challenge existing assumptions. While not immediately practical, this protection is vital.

Of all the perspectives we can explore, the idea of the "other" may be the most important for Americans today. Our campuses must push our students to learn globally, interact with those who are nothing like them, try on ideas, languages, cultures, and concepts completely foreign to them or they will not equip our country to thrive in the coming decades. Americans may not always, as we do today, set the tone, pace and the stage for worldwide commerce and inquiry. We must prepare students to succeed among our fellow nations, both as trendsetters and as recipients of change thrust upon us.

We do this of course by urging students to learn a bit about foreign languages and cultures. But the most effective current approach is short-term study abroad. Universities are now offering 10 to 16 day trips to study and explore a culture at an affordable price, without a commitment to long periods away from home. This more comfortable introduction can still change a life, leading students to return to exploring other cultures skillfully later in life. Parents and employers can support students to taking a short time away from home and work, and we commit to low costs, with academic credit awarded for study abroad.

American higher education is a public good. Any loss in the access already gained could erode many of the strengths we enjoy in our society today. It will take vigilance and close cooperation to maintain our current competitive strength. What a great opportunity we have to start—together, today.