

Subject: ACF Report -- April 2018 meeting

Date: Monday, April 23, 2018 at 8:24:19 AM Eastern Daylight Time

From: Max Guirguis

To: employees-l

Dear Colleagues:

Attached below is my ACF meeting report.

Best,

Max

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ACF April 2018 Meeting Report

The Advisory Council of Faculty (ACF) has met on Thursday, April 19, 2018 in Fairmont, WV, at the Advanced Technology Center of Pierpont CTC. Below are the highlights of the meeting.

1) There was an extended discussion on the erosion of tenure at Fairmont State University and Concord University. As stated in the March 2018 report, the Boards of Governors of both universities have used their new powers under HB 2542 to introduce policies that pose a serious threat to faculty tenure. These adverse policies have been adopted at Fairmont State University but are still under debate at Concord University. Concord's ACF representative, Joseph Allen, reported that the Faculty Executive Board of the university has adopted a resolution on April 9th requesting that "the President refer the Reduction in Force policy to a committee consisting of two faculty members appointed by the Faculty Executive Board." Several ACF members reported that their faculty senates have recently passed resolutions expressing support for the institution of tenure. While these resolutions indicate a growing concern over the ongoing dilution of tenure security, they only serve as advisory statements or declarations that have no binding effect. The best and most effective approach would be to try to amend HB 2542 so that the provisions of HEPC Series 9 would take precedence over BOG policies in all faculty matters, including promotion and tenure. Toward this end, the ACF will reach out to state legislators who have shown goodwill and readiness to advocate for higher education issues, such as Senator Kenny Mann (Senate District 10) and Delegate Edward Evans (House District 26). It was duly noted that Delegate Evans was very critical of SB 372, which was introduced by Senator Charles Trump IV (Senate District 15) during the 2018 session to eliminate faculty tenure from public colleges and universities. Senator Mann and Delegate Evans, among other supportive lawmakers, will be invited to the ACF's July 2018 retreat.

- 2) There was a brief discussion of whether the ACF should openly endorse pro-education candidates who are running for office. The general consensus was that the ACF should not take political stances, consistent with its longstanding commitment to non-partisan engagement with various state actors.
- 3) Larry Baker of Glenville State College reported that his institution is enjoying such a tremendous growth that the student population has outgrown the available housing space. In consequence, Glenville is experiencing a hiring surge and is currently spending \$1.6 million to renovate a hotel and turn it into a student dorm.
- 4) Mike Ditchen of Bridge Valley CTC attended the meeting of the WV Council for Community and Technical Education, which took place earlier the same day. He reported that Council Chairman Bob Brown would like to organize a one- or two-day retreat this summer to iron out the details of the state funding model that has not yet been finalized. Chairman Brown noted that a funding model different from the one presented at the March HEPC meeting should be used for CTCs because they serve a different student population than their four-year counterparts. CTCs cater to part-time and adult non-degree students whose educational goals are often different from those of the full-time degree-seeking students at four-year institutions. As such, a funding formula that is based on graduation rates, the number of degrees completed in high-demand fields, and the number of credit hours that students are enrolled in per semester would be inappropriate for CTCs. The HEPC is accepting comments until April 27th on the proposed funding model, which clearly favors in-state students. It appears from the comments received so far that some institutions are categorically opposed to the inclusion of out-of-state students in the new funding formula.
- 5) Two ACF members reported that instructors at their institutions are encouraged to move away from print textbooks and adopt ebooks instead to save students money.
- 6) One ACF member expressed a concern that graduation ceremonies are now being held in local houses of worship due to the increase in the number of graduates in recent years. The main conclusion of the discussion is that concerned faculty members should notify the administration if any students complain about the nature of the venue, or if religious elements are included in the ceremony.
- 7) The information on the ACF website is not up-to-date. ACF members agreed to take down the website and post an "Under Construction" notice until the update is complete.
- 8) The next ACF meeting will be held on Thursday, June 22, 2018 in Charleston, WV.