

ACF November 2018 Meeting Report

The Advisory Council of Faculty (ACF) met on Friday, November 16, 2018 in Charleston, WV. Below are the highlights of the meeting.

I. Distribution of the 2018-2019 ACF Brochure

The newly printed brochure was distributed at the meeting. I have attached it to this email in Adobe PDF format.

II. Update on the ACF Retreat of Summer 2019

ACF Chair Marybeth Beller reported contacting several potential venues for the 2019 three-day retreat. After some discussion, the group agreed to hold the retreat at Twin Falls Resort State Park, which offered the best prices for guest and meeting rooms.

III. Presentation on Open Educational Resources (OER)

Hunter Barclay, president of Marshall University SGA and chair of the WV Advisory Council of Students, was invited as a guest to speak on the ongoing efforts to expand the use of OER in higher education. He noted that the rising cost of textbooks and other learning materials is keeping some students from completing their studies and adding to the debt of those who do. One effective way to lower costs is to adopt more OER.

Mr. Barclay and other student leaders in the state spent several months identifying, evaluating, and comparing educational materials that are available at no or reduced cost to students. They selected the best resources and put them in what they called a “Textbook Menu,” which is a flyer that has information about free and affordable course materials, digital subscriptions, e-textbooks, and software. Examples of these resources include OpenStax, Cengage Unlimited, VitalSource, and Flatworld Knowledge.

Student representative groups are currently working with administrations and libraries to find ways to incorporate open-source and low-cost products into various courses, disciplines, and programs. While faculty are highly encouraged to consider OER when selecting textbooks, there are no plans to mandate their use in order to preserve academic freedom and autonomy. Similarly, bookstores are not required to carry the recommended course materials, but are encouraged to at least advertise cost-saving textbook options to students. For its part, the ACF intends to work with the HEPC to help publicize the availability of public domain and open access content.

IV. Updates on the 2019 Legislative Session

Harry Baxter, ACF Legislative Liaison, offered the following updates on the upcoming legislative session:

- ❑ Since the state legislature remains controlled by a large Republican majority, bills that have not been acted on or passed into law in 2018 will likely be reintroduced in the new session.
- ❑ While the state budget has not fully recovered, it has been more stable and is expected to grow. No budget cuts should be anticipated in the next academic year.
- ❑ Given the improved economic environment, a member of the Blue Ribbon Commission (Marshall University President Jerome Gilbert) has proposed the allocation of an additional \$10 million to regional four-year institutions. This one-time allocation is intended to offset funding inadequacies and mitigate the effects of the new funding formula. The Blue Ribbon Commission is expected to make recommendation to the state legislature on how much additional money should be allocated to which institutions.
- ❑ Governor Jim Justice announced in October 2018 that PEIA would receive a funding boost of \$100 million and state workers would receive a pay increase in the next fiscal year. The fate of these proposals remains uncertain and rests with the state legislature.

Following these updates, there was a discussion of how different institutions went about distributing the pay-raise money this year. It was resolved to collect data from the HEPC on the number of faculty members at state institutions. The ACF would then use this data to recommend to the legislature the amount of state funds needed to provide the faculty with a 5 percent pay raise.

V. Updates from Dr. Corley Dennison, HEPC's Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

- ❑ Up to this time, there seems to be no consensus among members of the Blue Ribbon Commission, which was established by the governor in July 2018 to chart the future of higher education. While the future is still cloudy for the state's higher learning institutions, the status quo will be kept until some consensus is reached on key issues. A preliminary report is expected to be released on December 9th.
- ❑ The governor is expected to present the state legislature with the ideas and recommendations that ultimately come out of the Blue Ribbon Commission.
- ❑ The Blue Ribbon Commission is considering a proposal to replace the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) with a new oversight and coordinating body called the Office of Post-Secondary Education (OPE). The elimination of the HEPC and the creation of the OPE would cut across the jurisdictions of several legislative committees and entail substantial code changes and additions. It remains unclear whether the OPE would have any purview over two-year institutions. It is also unclear how many or which of the HEPC's functions would be assumed by the OPE.
- ❑ The first meeting of the library committee was held on Thursday, November 15th. Librarians and administrations from institutions across the state met to work out the details of creating a single library system that would result in significant savings annually. The committee will produce a report or action plan by spring of 2019 that will have to be approved by both the HEPC and CTC Council.
- ❑ The HEPC supports the idea of using open-source materials in place of traditional textbooks. A one-day workshop for administrators and faculty

may be held in the summer or fall of 2019 to educate them about copyright and fair use laws, and to promote the use of open-source materials.

VI. Report on the November 16th HEPC Meeting by Larry Baker

- ❑ In its appropriation request to the State Budget Office, the HEPC asked for \$10 million for code compliance and deferred maintenance projects. If authorized, 80% of the money will be available to four-year institutions and 20 percent to two-year institutions. As done in the past, institutions applying for code compliance or deferred maintenance funding will be required to match the state's capital investment.
- ❑ ACCE echoed the ACF's call for a lasting solution to the large-scale insolvency problem of PEIA. Although the FY2018 appropriation kept deductibles, co-pays, and premiums from increasing, it was more of a short-term fix than a long-term endeavor.
- ❑ Revisions to Series 21, which deals with Freshmen Assessment and Placement Standards, have been approved. The HEPC has signed a five-year contract with the College Board to allow the SAT to replace the ACT as the 11th grade assessment exam for the state. Some 18,000 high school students will be taking the SAT test each year. It should be noted that each institution may establish admission standards and requirements above the minimum scores approved by the HEPC.
- ❑ The HEPC has also approved revisions to Series 41, which deals with Health Sciences. The existing rules require students who receive the monetary recruitment incentive to practice in a rural area or an underserved community upon graduation for two years full-time or four years part-time. The revision would delay the receipt of the award amount until the practice has been completed. Students would also have to certify that they used the award to discharge a qualifying educational debt.
- ❑ A Comprehensive Financial Aid Report was presented. It included many details about the numbers of students enrolled in state financial assistance programs. Over 90 percent of West Virginia students receive some form of

financial aid. As might be expected, students in the state's poorest counties needed the most aid.

- ❑ An Enrollment Report was presented. Across the state, headcount has dropped by 2.8 percent, first-time freshmen enrollment had dropped by 8.6 percent, and retention is up 0.5 percent. These are the statewide averages for both two-year and four-year institutions.
- ❑ The HEPC has been working with TIAA to reduce plan administration costs and enhance investment growth potential. The HEPC will continue working with TIAA to increase the services available to participants.
- ❑ The West Virginia Regional Technology Park Board is partnering with the HEPC to recruit WV workers. This is part of a concerted effort to revitalize the South Charleston area. The Technology Park could have as many as 1000 employees by 2020.
- ❑ Fairmont State University has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the American Campus on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius to offer graduate degrees in Architecture and Business Administration, and undergraduate degrees in Engineering Technology, Information Systems, Management, Computer Science, Business Administration and Psychology.

Respectfully submitted,

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