

MINUTES
Marshall University Board of Governors
Microsoft Teams Meeting at
Shawkey Dining Room/Memorial Student Center
Livestream and In-Person
April 9, 2025

Present: Shawn Ball, Brea Belville, Kathy D'Antoni, Kathy Eddy, Donnie Holcomb, Carol Hurula, Samuel Moore, Geoff Sheils, James T. Smith

PH: Kipp Bodnar, Ginny Lee

Absent: Angel Moore, Chad Pennington, Robin Riner, Bill Smith

I. Call to Order

At the start of the meeting, Chairman Sheils paused the agenda to recognize former Board of Governors member Patrick Farrell, who served for seven and a half years before stepping down in December to assume his new role as Mayor of Huntington. Chairman Sheils reflected on Farrell's lasting impact on the board and the university, noting that his leadership played a vital role in the beginning stages of Marshall's transformation. He also expressed appreciation for Farrell's continued support and advice, even after his departure from the board.

Chairman Sheils then invited President Brad Smith to speak. President Smith emphasized the unique and historic relationship between Marshall University and the City of Huntington, stating that their futures are closely connected. He highlighted Farrell's deep understanding of this partnership and praised his leadership during his time on board, particularly his tenure as chair. President Smith also shared a personal story, noting that a call from Farrell helped lead to his current role at Marshall, calling it the "privilege of a lifetime."

Following President Smith's remarks, Mayor Farrell was invited to the podium to accept a token of appreciation from the board. In his comments, he thanked the board members for their partnership and reflected on how his time at Marshall inspired his entry into public service. He stressed the importance of continuing the work at the university despite external challenges and acknowledged the significant role faculty, staff, and students play in shaping the broader community. He closed by saying he looks forward to continued collaboration in his new role as Mayor.

II. Minutes Approval

Upon a motion by Kathy Eddy, seconded by Carol Hurula, the minutes of the meeting held on February 5, 2025, were approved.

III. Faculty Senate Update

Shawn Schulenberg, Faculty Senate Chair gave the Faculty Update. Dr. Schulenberg delivered his third annual address to the Board, reflecting on the evolving role of the university within a broader societal and political context. Drawing on Plato's Allegory of the Cave, he used the metaphor to emphasize the importance of critical thinking, the pursuit of knowledge, and the challenges that can arise when confronting established perspectives.

He acknowledged increasing external pressures on higher education, including political and legislative changes at both the state and federal levels, as well as restrictions on certain academic programs and support initiatives. These pressures, he noted, have contributed to a climate of uncertainty for faculty and staff.

Despite these challenges, Shawn highlighted that Marshall University has taken a more measured and mission-focused approach—prioritizing long-term planning and shared governance while significantly reducing its budget deficit. He commended the university community for maintaining a commitment to its core values and for fostering a collaborative environment.

He concluded by encouraging the Board and university leadership to continue aligning decisions with the institution's academic mission and public responsibility, rather than short-term trends or external pressures. He referenced the university's creed as a guiding principle and reaffirmed the importance of maintaining a space for open inquiry, learning, and civic engagement.

IV. Committee of the Whole

A) Approval of Updated Board of Governors Rule No. GA-3 - Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual & Domestic Misconduct, Stalking, and Retaliation Policy - Including Title IX

The following resolution was read:

Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve Updated Board of Governors Rule No. GA-3 - Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Sexual & Domestic Misconduct, Stalking, and Retaliation Policy - Including Title IX

Upon a motion by Jim Smith, seconded by Carol Hurula, without further discussion, a vote of aye, no objections and the motion carried unanimously.

V. Committee Meeting Reports

Academic and Student Affairs

A) Approval of Degree Addition: Bachelor of Science in Data Science

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve the degree addition:
Bachelor of Science in Data Science*

*** Demand for Data Science Professionals**

Studies of top global companies show a rising demand for graduates with expertise in data analytics. The fields of data science and analytics are rapidly growing and will remain in high demand for the next decade and beyond. The National Science Foundation (NSF) highlights data science as an inherently interdisciplinary field, requiring knowledge in statistics, computer science, and mathematics.

What is Data Science?

Data science is an evolving discipline that combines scientific methods, analytical techniques, algorithms, and computational systems to extract insights from raw data. It integrates statistics, computer science, and mathematics to analyze information and provide meaningful solutions in various fields, including business, healthcare, and industry.

Data scientists (often referred to as data analysts in professional settings) play a crucial role in:

- *Defining key business or research questions.*
- *Applying techniques such as data mining, machine learning, and predictive modeling to generate insights.*
- *Enhancing operational efficiency and decision-making across industries by optimizing processes and reducing costs.*

The BSDS Degree Program at Marshall University

The Bachelor of Science in Data Science (BSDS) program equips students with essential analytical and computational skills to tackle data-driven challenges in business, healthcare, government, and industry. This program complements the recently launched Master of Science in Data Science (MSDS) within the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences, providing a seamless pathway for advanced study.

Benefits of Marshall's BSDS Program?

• *Strong Interdisciplinary Foundation – The program leverages expertise from the Department of Computer Sciences and Electrical Engineering and the Department of Mathematics, which offer specialized courses in mathematics and statistics.*

- *Comprehensive Curriculum – The BSDS curriculum includes:*
- *Core courses in data science, statistics, and computer science.*
- *General education courses to develop critical and analytical thinking skills.*
- *Career Readiness – The program prepares graduates for professional careers in the rapidly expanding data science industry, helping drive technological advancements and research innovations at local and national levels.*

B) Approval of Degree Addition: Bachelor of Arts in Biological Sciences

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve the degree addition:
Bachelor of Arts in Biological Sciences*

** Currently, the Department of Biological Sciences in the College of Science offers a B.S. in Biological Sciences, with three areas of emphasis (Cell, Molecular and Medical Biology; Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology; Forensic Biology). The degree currently requires our core biology classes along with calculus, organic chemistry, and physics. This degree is constructed for and primarily targets students who intend to pursue careers in scientific*

research, technical work, or doctoral level professional degrees (e.g., medical, dental, etc.). The BS ensures that students get the rigorous coursework and other preparation needed to succeed in those paths.

The proposed B.A. in Biological Sciences will be differentiated from the B.S. in that fewer non-biology STEM courses will be required and the number of free elective hours will increase. These changes will appeal to students who have interest in biology-related careers but do not need all of the math, upper-level chemistry, or physics required for the B.S. degree. This subtle shift opens up possibilities to attract students who are interested in fields such as science law/policy; primary, secondary, or college education; scientific writing or journalism, business, and professional schools or biology-related jobs that require fewer STEM courses. Such students will be able to broaden their experience via free electives and/or have far more flexibility to pursue double majors with the proposed B.A. degree.

The department can accommodate the proposed B.A. degree within the existing curriculum. It would not require new courses, and at least for the first years, would not require increased teaching loads for faculty. The B.A. degree is likely to increase enrollment in existing courses. A significant demand for the program will necessitate additional faculty or graduate assistant lines in the future. We believe the new degree will provide science education for more students and will enhance degree and career pathways (for instance, students double majoring in education and biology or political science and biology). The mission of the BA in Biological Sciences is to:

- 1. Provide students with a sturdy foundation in biological information, reasoning, and technique.*
- 2. Prepare students for careers in fields that require, or can benefit from, a strong understanding of biology.*
- 3. Encourage rigorous critical thinking, and evaluation of scientific data, information, or marketing.*
- 4. Contribute to the mission of the university and the College of Science by encouraging students to use the skills and knowledge developed in this program to become active and thoughtful members of their community.*

C) Approval of Degree Addition: Master of Science in Library Science

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve the degree addition:
the Master of Science in Library Science*

** The Master of Science in Library Science degree will be the first and only master's degree in library and information science offered in the State of West Virginia and will be a strategic addition to Marshall's graduate degree portfolio. The external demand study for this degree from Hanover Research indicates there is a strong combination of student interest, demand from employers, and industry demand for this program. Their benchmarking shows most competitors award 50 or more degrees per year and have positive and increasing enrollment trends. The labor market growth rate in the field was 3.8% from 2017-2021, exceeding the 2.9% average for all occupations. The degree completion growth rate in that period was 8.2%, exceeding the 1.4% average over all programs. This program will be offered as an online/distance program.*

As the program grows, some classes may also be offered in-person based on demand and teaching capacity. All of the benchmarked comparison programs are offered online, as well. Marshall will repurpose an existing position to hire a director for the program, while existing library faculty will be able to teach a number of the courses. The program will not require significant capital or startup investments. This program will also strengthen Marshall's partnership to support libraries throughout the state by providing a source of highly qualified librarians.

This program will be offered as an online/distance program. As the program grows, some classes may also be offered in-person based on demand and teaching capacity. All of the benchmarked comparison programs are offered online, as well. Marshall will repurpose an existing position to hire a director for the program, while existing library faculty will be able to teach a number of the courses. The program will not require significant capital or startup investments. This program will also strengthen Marshall's partnership to support libraries throughout the state by providing a source of highly qualified librarians.

D) Approval of Degree Addition: Master of Science in Health and Movement Sciences

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve the degree addition:
Bachelor of Arts in Biological Sciences*

** This is a reorganization of two existing master's programs, the MS in Biomechanics and the MS in Exercise Science. For the purposes of university approval, the reorganization appears as a creation of a new combined program. Because the new program is a combination of existing programs, no other resources are required to offer the new program. The School of Health and Movement Sciences, formerly the School of Kinesiology, is housed within the College of Health Professions and currently has master's degree programs in Athletic Training, Biomechanics, and Exercise Science. Each of these programs has a common core stemming from the study of kinesiology.*

This proposal will create a STEM-designated master's degree combining the current Biomechanics and Exercise Science MS degree programs. The MS Athletic Training will remain a standalone degree program due to external accreditation requirements. The new Health and Movement Sciences degree will offer four majors: Biomechanics, Exercise Physiology, Sport Science, and Strength & Conditioning. The degree will require 36-39 credit hours depending on the major. The new degree program will streamline the current structure of the School of Health and Movement Sciences as well as making it easier for students to move between majors within the degree program while remaining in the same catalog year from when they entered Marshall University.

Enrollment in the combined programs (Biomechanics and Exercise Science) has been modest but steady. The combined program will have a STEM designation (CIP code 26.0908) that will provide additional opportunities for students and increase marketability of the program. The STEM designation will also provide additional opportunities for faculty to apply for external funding, supporting Marshall's R2 designation.

Upon a motion by Donnie Holcomb, seconded by Samuel Moore, without further discussion, a vote of aye, no objections and the motions carried unanimously for all four-degree additions.

E) Approval of 2024-2025 Academic Program Review Recommendations

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve the 2024-2025
Academic Program Review Recommendations*

He reported continued progress on three key academic leadership searches. He said finalists for the Dean of the College of Business have completed their campus visits, and a final decision is expected by the end of the week or early next week. He added that similar searches are underway for the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Education and Professional Development, with finalists scheduled to visit in the coming weeks and selections expected by the end of April.

As the semester nears its conclusion, Dr. Mukherjee said the campus remains active, and he provided a number of academic and programmatic highlights. He said the College of Arts and Media welcomed Marie E. Redd—West Virginia’s first African American state senator—for the Carter G. Woodson Lecture. He said MU Cyber Con 2025 successfully brought together cybersecurity professionals, students, and industry leaders, with President Brad D. Smith delivering the keynote. He also said the university’s one-room schoolhouse was officially added to the National Schoolhouse Register, with a commemorative plaque to be installed in June.

He said the College of Health Professions received a \$100,000 gift to establish the John A. Sturgeon Nursing Scholarship. He reported that the College of Liberal Arts celebrated the 150th anniversary of its Humanities Department with a symposium featuring author Madeline Miller and Dr. Suzanne Lye of UNC Chapel Hill. He also noted that Marshall’s online Criminal Justice program was ranked 20th nationally by U.S. News & World Report in its 2025 Best Online Programs.

Dr. Mukherjee said the Division of Aviation has joined the FAA UAS Center of Excellence and will begin training first responders in emergency response using drone technology. He added that Marshall’s online business programs received national recognition in three categories: undergraduate business, graduate business, and MBA. He said the School of Pharmacy recently hosted its Spring Preview Day, and that University Libraries launched the new Digital Scholarship Center to support research, data visualization, and innovation.

In terms of student support and engagement, Dr. Mukherjee said the Counseling Center conducted 1,601 appointments between January and February 2025, including 113 psychiatric sessions through a partnership with Marshall Health. He said the university launched a new community service platform in collaboration with MU IT and Salesforce, expanding volunteer opportunities for students.

He also said that Marshall Online achieved a record 22.4% increase in enrollment, reaching 1,581 students, the highest in its history. Additionally, he said the Esports Call of Duty team ranked third in the Southeast Appalachian region and tied for 22nd nationally.

Dr. Mukherjee concluded by commending the ongoing efforts of faculty, staff, and students, and said their dedication continues to drive the university forward as the semester comes to a close.

Student Representative Report

Brea Belville, Student Body President, gave the Student Representative update. During her report, Brea Belville stated that several student-led initiatives have recently reached successful conclusions, and she was pleased to provide updates on those efforts.

She began by highlighting the second annual Sun Belt Conference Food Fight, which took place in February. During this event, the Student Government Association coordinated the collection of food and hygiene items to benefit the Marshall Food Pantry and flood relief efforts across West Virginia. Brea said the response from students, campus leaders, and the community was overwhelmingly positive. In total, 3,988 items were collected, along with more than \$5,000 in donations. She noted that this initiative not

only provided critical resources to students but also reinforced the campus-wide spirit of generosity and service.

Brea also shared that she was honored to be selected as Marshall University's "Be the One Ambassador," a role held by just one student at each higher education institution in the state. In this role, she said her primary responsibility is to educate peers on safe medication practices and provide life-saving information on how to respond to opioid overdoses. Through her partnership with the West Virginia Collegiate Recovery Network, she said she trained 33 students and distributed Naloxone to over 20 individuals, including President Smith. She said this initiative has been personally meaningful and has made a lasting impact on student health and safety.

In other updates, Brea said Greek Week took place this past week, and as part of a philanthropic effort, Marshall's fraternities and sororities raised over \$11,500 for the Student Emergency Fund. She said she was proud of the Greek community's commitment to supporting fellow students through this impactful contribution.

Looking ahead, Brea said several upcoming events are generating excitement among students. One of the most anticipated is the Spring Bound ceremony, scheduled for Saturday, followed by the spring football game. She said both events are expected to bring out strong student participation and provide an opportunity to celebrate Marshall's traditions and school spirit.

Additionally, she said she is coordinating a food truck event later this month to promote campus unity. The event will offer a variety of food options and is designed to bring students, faculty, and staff together in a casual, community-centered setting on the Memorial Student Center plaza.

Brea also noted that SGA elections kicked off last week and that results will be announced soon. While this marks the final phase of her term, she emphasized that the work of the Student Government Association is far from over. Echoing remarks shared earlier by Athletic Director Christian Spears, she reaffirmed the SGA's commitment to enhancing the student experience and continuing to implement meaningful initiatives that will benefit the campus community well into the future.

She concluded by thanking the Board for their time and said she looks forward to connecting again in June.

School of Medicine Report

Dr. David Gozal, Dean and Vice President for Health Affairs presented the School of Medicine report. During his report, Dr. Gozal stated that the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine recently celebrated another successful Match Day. A total of 69 fourth-year medical students from the Class of 2025 matched to residency programs, with half entering primary care and the remainder securing positions in highly competitive specialties. He added that all 14 of Marshall's residency training programs filled 100% of their first-year slots, including the newly established rural internal medicine residency. New resident physicians and fellows will begin their training on July 1, 2025.

Dr. Gozal announced that the School of Medicine has launched its official countdown to the 2027 accreditation visit by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). He noted that the school is currently fully accredited, meeting 92 out of 93 required elements. He explained that preparation for this

comprehensive process is already underway, with key components—including the Data Collection Instrument, Self-Study, and Independent Student Analysis—set to be submitted in February 2026. The site visit is scheduled to take place March 14–17, 2027 and will involve an in-depth review of the school's compliance and performance.

In support of its strategic goals, the School of Medicine has named several individuals to new leadership roles. Dr. Gozal stated that these appointments will strengthen the school's academic and clinical mission across various departments, including Internal Medicine, Oncology, Ophthalmology, Informatics, Research, Clinical Affairs, and the Physician Assistant Program.

Dr. Gozal highlighted notable research achievements within the school. He shared that Dr. Brandon Henderson received a prestigious NIH R01 grant to study the effects of synthetic coolants in vaping products and their connection to nicotine addiction. Additionally, he reported on a recent study published in *Nature Communications*, led by Dr. Wei Xu, which explores a new approach to treating severe infections caused by *Streptococcus pyogenes*. The research demonstrated how targeting bacterial metabolism could improve immune response and healing.

He also discussed innovative contributions in medical education. Dr. Thomas Wright, now a second-year internal medicine resident, developed practical simulation models for surgical training using everyday materials such as balloons and straws. What began as a creative idea has evolved into an effective hands-on teaching tool used to train both medical students and residents.

Dr. Gozal recognized Dr. Gary Rankin, Vice Dean for Research, for his induction into the 2025 WV Executive magazine Health Care Hall of Fame. Dr. Rankin, who joined Marshall University in 1978 as an assistant professor of pharmacology, was honored for his longstanding commitment to medical research and education, as well as his foundational role in the growth of the School of Medicine.

He also reported on recent community outreach efforts. In early February, medical outreach teams from the School of Medicine and Marshall Health Network mobilized to provide assistance to residents of McDowell and Mingo counties following severe flooding. Under the leadership of Dr. Katherine Steele, more than 30 student and resident volunteers offered medical exams, prescription support, vaccinations, and cleanup assistance. Dr. Makala Murphy, a family medicine resident and native of Gilbert, West Virginia, played a key role in organizing the initiative.

In conclusion, Dr. Gozal noted that women leaders from the School of Medicine and Marshall Health Network led a panel discussion on leadership, advocacy, and mentorship at the annual WV Chamber Women's Leadership Summit on March 27. The panel featured prominent voices from across the health system and was moderated by third-year surgical resident Dr. Taylor Adkins. Dr. Gozal closed his report by expressing pride in the school's ongoing accomplishments and its continued progress toward excellence in education, research, and community service.

Finance, Audit and Facilities Planning Committee

The following are action items from the Finance, Audit and Facilities Planning Committee:

A) Approval of Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

The following resolution was read:

Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors the Marshall University Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

** We are presenting the FY26 Marshall University Budget for approval. Our enduring financial principles continue to inform our proposed budget choices for 2026.*

Grow Students, Not Fees

A minimal 2.5% tuition increase for Resident Students while holding Non-Resident, International, and Metro tuition flat to FY25 levels. A conservative +1% Fall 2024 vs Fall 2025 total enrollment increase is assumed. A series of strategic investments have been included in the FY26 Budget to ensure and outpace this assumption.

Invest in Our Team

Included in the FY26 budget are market equity adjustments of \$369K for 156 employees that will bring them to the minimum of the new salary scale. The State of West Virginia did not fund employee pay raises in FY26.

Take Care of the House

Marshall University was allocated \$21.8m from the State of West Virginia for deferred maintenance of which almost \$6M has been received and an additional draw down is expected in FY26. A total of 21 projects have been completed or are underway.

Manage Our Strategic Resources

Continue to define financial resiliency levels to provide fiscal sustainability, strategic investments and transition to an accountable financial model. The university will draw down \$21.5M in Meketa investments to strengthen our cash position while maintaining our financial resiliency levels at 12 months of debt service plus two months of operating expenses. In addition, a series of strategic initiatives have been launched to reignite growth and align expenses to performance and benchmark expectations in the future.

Net Result

A proposed FY2026 budget that continues a multi-year journey:

- *Projected Revenue: \$358.7M (+1.9% vs 2025 Projected)*
- *Projected Expense: \$371.1M (+1.3% vs 2025 Projected)*

Upon a motion by Brea Belville, seconded by Jim Smith without further discussion, a vote of aye, no objections and the motion carried unanimously.

B) Approval of Schedule of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Tuition and Fee Rates

The following resolution was read:

Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approves the Schedule of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Tuition and Fee Rates

** We are presenting the FY26 Tuition and Fee Rate schedule for approval. The University is proposing an overall 2.5% increase to undergraduate and graduate resident tuition and fees. The University is proposing to maintain Non-Resident, International, and Metro undergraduate and graduate tuition and fee rates at the FY25 level. The University is proposing an average ~2.6% increase in Housing rates and a 4% increase in Dining rates. In addition, the University is proposing increases to Capital Fees and Auxiliary Fees. Various other tuition and fee pricing changes are captured in the accompanying schedules.*

Upon a motion by Kathy D'Antoni, seconded by Kathy Eddy, without further discussion, a vote of aye, no objections and the motion carried unanimously.

Information Items

Of note, in the package, there are updates for:

Finance Update

Facilities and Operations Update

Internal Audit Update

Athletic Committee

The following are action items from the Athletic Committee:

A) Approval of Athletics Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

The following resolution was read:

Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approves the proposed Athletics Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026, as part of the university's budget process

Upon a motion by Brea Belville, seconded by Donnie Holcomb, without further discussion, a vote of aye, no objections and the motion carried unanimously.

Information Items

Of note, in the board package, there are updates for:

Athletic Team Update

NCAA Legislation/National Issues Updates

Budget Update

Capital Projects Update

Appendix: Athletic Facilities – Outside Rentals

VI. President's Report

**The President's report is attached as an addendum to the Board of Governor's minutes.*

VII. Executive Session under the authority of WV Code § 6-9A-4

Upon a motion by Brea Belville, seconded by Carol Hurula, the board entered Executive Session under the authority of WV Code §6-9A-4 to discuss Matters involving Commercial Competition.

After a brief session, the Board entered open session. No votes were taken during the Executive Session.

IX. Chairman Sheils Report

During his report, Chairman Sheils reflected on his nearly seven years of service on the Board of Governors, remarking on how quickly the time has passed. He expressed deep appreciation for the input, voice, and participation of board members representing students, faculty, and staff. He emphasized the importance of shared governance at Marshall University and commended the collaborative spirit that guides the Board's work.

Chairman Sheils specifically recognized Brea Belville, Robin Riner (who was unable to attend), and Carol Hurula for their dedication and valuable contributions to the Board. He extended his gratitude to both current and former board representatives for their continued commitment and engagement throughout his tenure.

He went on to announce that Spring Commencement will be held on May 10th at the Marshall Health Network Arena and shared that Soledad O'Brien has been confirmed as the Commencement speaker. Chairman Sheils applauded the efforts of the many individuals involved in organizing the event, noting that it is always a professional and well-executed celebration. He acknowledged the hard work that goes into making the ceremony a meaningful experience for students and their families.

Additionally, he confirmed with Brea Belville that the Spring Fountain Ceremony will take place on Saturday at 11:30 a.m., and encouraged those who are able to attend to do so.

In closing, Chairman Sheils expressed sincere appreciation to his fellow board members for their dedication and service. He acknowledged that many members travel significant distances to attend meetings in person and participate in evening sessions and Zoom calls. He offered a special thank you to Ginny Lee and Kipp Bodnar for joining virtually and extended his gratitude to all board members for their time, energy, and thoughtful contributions to the university.

X. Announcements

XI. Adjournment

Without objection, the Board Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy D'Antoni, Secretary

President's Report – April 2025

- Good afternoon, and thank you for the time and energy you invested this week, both with the Budget Training Session and for today's mtg.
- Before sharing my regular report, I wanted to take a moment to share an important personnel announcement ...
 - (REFER TO AVI's ANNOUNCEMENT)
- As I've shared with the campus community in recent weeks, 2025 has been a whirlwind of chaos, confusion and continuous change ...
 - And it hasn't been easy for many of us ... our families ... or our institutions.
- My youngest daughter recently asked me when things were going to get easier?
- In response, I shared with her a quote I'd recently read by Kara Lawson, the Coach of the Duke Women's Basketball team:
 - "We don't get to choose what kind of adversity we face.
 - The world isn't going to get easier.
 - What happens is you handle hard better.
 - If you have a meaningful pursuit in life, it's going to be hard.
 - But the key is learning to handle hard better."

- The current geopolitical, technological, social and economic landscapes are undergoing significant shifts that are occurring at a dizzying pace, and we're being impacted from every angle ... it's required strategic clarity, teamwork and agility to remain on track.
- And that describes how we're navigating this period at Marshall ...
 - We are succeeding because we have a strategic roadmap – Marshall For All, Marshall Forever that we wrote together...
 - We are succeeding because we are working together – living our shared governance model on a daily basis, convening the five families when necessary to navigate uncertainty ...
 - And we are succeeding because we are Marshall, and we have learned to handle hard better ...
 - Whether it was surviving the Civil War when Union soldiers sought to burn Marshall College to the ground, only to be saved by Salina Hite Mason and her sisters,
 - Or enduring the aftermath of the plane crash in 1970 ...
 - We have learned to handle hard better at Marshall University ... together.
- With this context, I want to focus my update on three areas:
 1. The current reality we're navigating in this congressional and legislative session, the potential implications, and what has been discussed and put into action so far.

2. Then, I'll then place these activities into the broader state of the university and the adjustments we're making in light of these changes.

3. And I'll close with my request of our campus & community.

- Let me begin with the political and legislative landscape:
 - At the federal level, we've been navigating an onslaught of executive orders, DOGE implications and budgetary cuts.
 - These actions have impacted us in a variety of ways ...
 - From defining new expectations around diversity, equity and inclusion, which required us to adjust our approach to how services and support will be provided on campus;
 - To the downsizing and proposed elimination of the Department of Education which processes financial aid and provides other support services to our national education system;
 - In concert with the proposed reduction in research funding for indirect cost recovery which could cost Marshall \$1.85M annually ...
 - And then there's the recent Congressional action to pass a Continuing Resolution to avoid a government shutdown ... extending funding until the end September 2025 –
 - The good news is we avoided a Government shutdown...

- But the bad news is a Continuing Resolution doesn't include any of the negotiated Congressionally Directed Spending projects previously requested ...
 - These included ~ \$44M in anticipated funding for Marshall University that is no longer committed.
- While not the news we had hoped for, the Congressional Appropriations Committee is expected to soon begin determining requirements for consideration for FY26 bills...
 - We are at the table, engaged and resubmitting our FY25 requests, in addition to identifying new requests for FY26 for Congressional consideration.
- Which takes me to the state level, where it has also been busy with executive orders and proposed legislative bills.
 - A total of 2,376 bills have been introduced in the Legislature, of which 51 bills mention higher education.
 - The major areas we've navigated thus far include:
 - The Governor's Executive Order outlining DEI guidelines and requirements ...
 - The proposed budget for next year, that includes an \$800,000 reduction for Marshall, no state EE pay increases and an increase of PEIA premiums of 14%.

- And a legislative bill to reclassify BOG members who are elected to represent the student government, faculty and staff to become non-voting members.
 - We've voiced our opposition to this bill, including letters and 1:1 meetings from all levels of our BOG & university, along with our peer institutions ...
 - Highlighting the importance and effectiveness of shared governance ... and we will continue to attempt to reshape the direction of the proposal.
- Suffice it to say that we are working very hard in this current environment at a federal and a state level ...
 - The implications, while still a work-in-process, are clear – what has occurred thus far has a potential impact on campus services, shared governance and 10's of millions of dollars that fund our strategic initiatives at Marshall ...
- Which takes me to my second topic – how we are navigating these stormy conditions.
 - First and foremost – we've kept our compass set to True North – Marshall For All, Marshall Forever – and on our 2037 goals:
 - To have 100% of our students graduate with a job and no student loan debt,
 - To grow our research, grants and contracts from \$73M today to \$150M, while increasing the number of start-ups in the state by 3X,

- And to grow our economic impact from an 18X return for every dollar invested, to a 30X return by 2037.
- This commitment has kept us focused and aligned ... remaining true to our financial principles:
 - To grow students, not fees,
 - To invest in our team ... both training and fair pay,
 - To take care of the house ... investing in technology and deferred maintenance,
 - And to strategically manage our resources ... eliminating our structural deficit by 2027.
- Despite the headwinds ... we're executing well against each of these principles, while strengthening our foundation:
 - In our quest to grow students, not fees ... Spring enrollment is up nearly 9% over the Fall 2024, with improved retention and student success.
 - And our Fall 2025 pipeline is looking stronger each day ...
 - We recently announced the newest element of our "Marshall For All" promise - "Tuition-Free WV".
 - This program provides tuition-free admission to Marshall University for WV residents with a household income <\$65K (or Pell-eligibility).

- In addition to launching this program, we are doubling the size of the Marshall For All debt-free program in the Fall 2025 ...
- Welcoming 200 new students with the debt-free promise, joining their peers in the Fall 2023 and Fall 2024 classes which each had 100 in them ...
- In addition, we recently announced a strategic partnership with Intuit to open a Prosperity Hub in our Innovation District (named the IDEA District – an acronym for Impossible Doesn't Exist Anymore).
 - The Prosperity Hub will provide access to 250 year-around job opportunities for our students, built around their class schedules and starting at \$18 an hour ...
 - The Prosperity Hub will enable them to earn while they learn, gaining real-world experience with a world class company.
- These actions, and more, demonstrate that we're staying focused on our students and their success!
- In our commitment to invest in the team ...
 - We're rolling out our new performance management system to ensure everyone has clear goals and regular check-ins with their supervisor.

- We're introducing a Total Rewards Statement that will help every employee better understand what their total pay and eligible benefits are ... so they can fully appreciate and maximize all that is available to them.
 - And while the Governor's budget proposal did not include a pay raise for state employees this year ... we remain committed to investing in our team ...
 - While we will not be implementing a pay increase for all employees this year, we are providing targeted pay increases for around 153 employees who are below the minimum of the new staff salary scale ... a ~\$400,000 investment.
 - We remain committed to our FY'27 goal to have all employees paid at or above the 80% of midpoint for their position ... which will require an additional ~\$600,000, and has been built in our 3-year plan to achieve.
- We also continue to take care of the house ...
 - We are actively working on 19 projects in our Shock & Awe program ... leveraging the \$21.8M in funding that was provided by the state last year to address deferred maintenance.
 - We're gearing up for our 4th annual Community Cares Week that is scheduled for May 20th-23rd ... where we'll invite the campus and community to

volunteer to help us spruce up the campus ... an effort that saved ~\$500,000 in expense last year!

- And we're finding creative ways to capitalize on the amazing house we've built, including the exciting Zach Bryan concert our Athletics department has organized for the campus and community in August,

- Generating revenue that will benefit our operations.

- Which is a nice transition to our fourth principle, continuing to manage our resources strategically, while navigating out of our structural deficit.
- If you recall, we started in 2022 with a forecasted deficit of \$28M, heading towards \$35M if we failed to adjust...
- We developed a strategic roadmap to grow our way out, while tightening our belts along the way ...
- Over the past two years, we've reduced our structural deficit to roughly \$14.5M, with a path to being in a net positive position by 2027 ...
- We've achieved this thoughtfully and collectively, by:
 - Increasing enrollment and student success ...
 - Growing our research, grants and contracts ...
 - Finding new sources of auxiliary revenue ...

- Finding efficiencies in supplies and other services through our Save-to-Serve efforts ...
 - And moving to an Incentivized Budget Model, increasing transparency and accountability across the campus.
- With that said, the external storm clouds have grown darker in the past several months ...
 - As I described, external funding sources at a federal and state level are being increasingly challenged, cut or placed on pause ...
 - In addition, we discovered a forecasting error in our cash flow model that suggested that we had more cushion to withstand this storm than is actually available ...
 - It's sort of like the old fuel gauge in your car 20 years ago that showed you still had a half a tank of gas, but when you flicked it with your finger, it showed that you're closer to an 1/8 of a tank of gas ... not enough reserve to get to through.
 - The good news is that we had anticipated we would be heading into stormy conditions as we entered this year's budget season, and had tasked the Budget Advisory Committee and each of the colleges and departments to prepare for a range of scenarios ...
 - A base case spending scenario ...

- A 2% expense reduction scenario ...
- And a 4% reduction scenario.
- Given all that's transpired, we're enacting the 4% reduction scenario to weather the storm and ensure we remain on track.
- We will also tap into our strategic reserves to shore up our cash flow during this period of time.
- It isn't easy, but it is necessary to keep us on track to achieve the goals we've set for ourselves.
- Which takes me to my third and final point ... my request of the campus and community.
 - "We don't get to choose what kind of adversity we face.
 - The world isn't going to get easier.
 - What happens is you handle hard better.
 - If you have a meaningful pursuit in life, it's going to be hard.
 - But the key is learning to handle hard better."
- At Marshall, it is meaningful pursuit, and the work we do matters.
 - We are changing lives, families and communities for generations to come.

- We may not get to choose the adversity we face, but we do get to choose who we face it with ...
- And I choose us ...
- My request of all of us is that we:
 - Give each other grace ...
 - Realize that we are navigating a period of difficult choices and trade-offs ...
 - Everything isn't going to feel good ...
 - But know that the person standing next to you cares, and wears the same Kelly Green jersey ...
 - They are acting with good intentions and simply doing the best they can in this incredibly dynamic and tense situation.
- So, in the midst of the discord, let's create our own harmony ...
 - By leaning into trust,
 - Caring for one another,
 - And moving together as one ...
 - Our plan is working ... and we're handling hard better than others ...

- Because that's how we're built ...
- That's who we are ...
- **We** Are ... Marshall!