

# **MINUTES**

## **Marshall University Board of Governors**

### **Microsoft Teams Meeting at**

### **Shawkey Dining Room/Memorial Student Center**

### **Livestream and In-Person**

**February 5, 2025**

**Present:** Shawn Ball, Brea Belville, Kathy D’Antoni, Kathy Eddy, Donnie Holcomb, Carol Hurula, Samuel Moore, Robin Riner, Bill Smith, James T. Smith,

**PH:** Ginny Lee, Angel Moore

**Absent:** Kipp Bodnar, Chad Pennington

#### **I. Call to Order**

Subsequently, upon confirming the presence of a quorum, Chairman Sheils called the meeting to order.

#### **II. Minutes Approval**

Upon a motion by Kathy D’Antoni, seconded by Brea Belville, the minutes of the meeting held on December 4, 2025, were approved.

#### **III. Committee of the Whole**

##### **A) Approval of Advisory Board Members for the West Virginia Autism Training Center**

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve Christina Lee Fair, Tiffany Hartman, Lalicia Johnson and Marcie E. Simms for the Advisory Board of the West Virginia Autism Training Center.*

*\*The West Virginia Autism Training Center (ATC) was established in 1984 by the West Virginia Legislature and housed at Marshall University, within the College of Education and Professional Development. The ATC was founded by Dr. Ruth Sullivan and other parents across the state who recognized the need of children with autism for well-informed parents and well-trained educators.*

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

#### **IV. Committee Meeting Reports**

##### **Academic and Student Affairs**

###### **A) Approval of the Adoption of the Marshall University Shared Governance Charter**

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve the Marshall University Shared Governance Charter.*

*\* The purpose of this Charter is to codify the definition, guiding principles, and structure of shared governance at Marshall University. The Charter delineates the roles and responsibilities of each governing body at the University, as well as codifying the process by which these bodies will be reviewed according to the shared governance guiding principles. Neither this Charter nor the actions taken by the bodies established under the Charter may contravene public law or the authority of the Board of Governors or the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission.*

**Upon a motion by Robin Riner, seconded by Kathy Eddy, without further discussion, a vote of aye, no objections and the motion carried unanimously.**

Information Items:

##### **Provost Report**

**Provost Avi Mukherjee** gave the Provost's Update. During his report, Provost Mukherjee highlighted several key updates and achievements across various academic departments and programs.

He began by recognizing two outstanding presentations delivered during the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee meeting—one by Dean Michael Prewitt of the College of Health Professions and another by HERD Start Early Academy Director Michelle Biggs and Associate Provost Karen McComas, who provided insights on Dual Enrollment and Transfer Students.

Provost Mukherjee announced that searches for three academic deans are set to commence soon for the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Education, and the College of Business.

In the College of Arts and Media, he shared exciting news about WMUL-FM acquiring a new Gates Air transmitter, an upgrade that will enhance its transmission range.

Turning to the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences, he reported that the Marshall University Institute for Cyber Security (ICS) hosted its fifth annual Cyber Safety Summit on November 20, 2024. This event brought together middle school students from across the region to educate and empower them on cyber safety in today's digital world.

Within the College of Education and Professional Development, he highlighted a significant achievement: Dr. Tarabeth Heineman, Executive Director of the June Harless Center, was named the 2024 "Education Champion of Children" by Every Child Now organization. She was honored for her dedication to the education of West Virginia's children at the fifth annual Every Child Now luncheon.

Provost Mukherjee also reported that the College of Health Professions received a major funding boost. The Huntington Scottish Rite Foundation and the Rite Care Clinic were awarded a \$50,000 Benedum Foundation Grant to support the Pediatric Feeding and Swallowing Clinic at the Marshall University Speech and Hearing Center. This funding will enable children on the therapy waitlist to participate in feeding groups.

In the College of Liberal Arts, he announced that the Andrew Mellon Foundation awarded a five-year, \$2.8 million grant to expand paid internship opportunities for students majoring in humanities disciplines. The grant will support the development of 75 paid internships annually in nonprofit agencies, significantly enhancing community-based learning opportunities, raising awareness of career competencies in the humanities, and contributing approximately 20,000 hours of skilled work for regional agencies each year.

Within the College of Science, Dr. Mindy Yeager-Armstead and her research collaborators secured a \$1.5 million, three-year grant from the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center for a cooperative project titled Prediction and Early Identification of Harmful Algal Blooms in Riverine Systems.

Provost Mukherjee also provided updates on the Division of Aviation, where the Aviation Maintenance Technology (AMT) school recently welcomed 400 middle and high school robotics students to its hangars for the annual Robotics STEM Competition. The two-day Eastern Regional event featured hands-on building, execution, and competition of various robotics designs.

Within the Lewis College of Business, he reported on the success of the Fifth Annual Marshall Business Research Conference, held on November 4, 2024. The event hosted 51 researchers from 17 universities across nine states, five countries, and four continents. With 33 innovative papers presented, the conference showcased the power of collaboration and diverse perspectives in business research.

The School of Pharmacy introduced a new scholarship opportunity for incoming first-year students. The Dean's Academic Excellence Scholarship will cover all tuition and fees, except for the final \$10,000 per year, providing substantial financial support for students pursuing pharmacy degrees.

In the University Libraries, the Special Collections department completed inventories for 136 collections within the University Archives in 2024, spanning 352 cubic feet of processed materials. Since the project's inception in September 2021, inventories for 387 collections—totaling 971 cubic feet—have been completed.

The Center for Student Success also reported significant progress. The Friend-at-Marshall (FAM) Peer Mentoring Program connected with 990 students, achieving an impressive 90% success rate.

Finally, he highlighted achievements within the Online Education Office, which has made notable strides in various areas, including AI and ethics. The office fielded and responded to 1,118 faculty inquiries while also expanding student workshops to enhance online learning experiences.

## **Student Representative Report**

**Brea Belville**, Student Body President, gave the Student Representative update. Brea reported that last week marked the kickoff of the first Provost's Student Advisory Board Meeting of the semester. She shared that this meeting was an incredible opportunity for students to learn new skills and provide feedback on how to enhance the university experience. One of the skills covered was Artificial Intelligence, where David Wiley guided students through the fundamentals of prompt writing. Students also learned how to effectively use CoPilot and provided insightful feedback.

Additionally, Brea reported that students have been serving on various committees throughout the semester. She is currently serving on the Search Committee for the Lewis College of Business, while Connor Waller is on the Search Committee for the College of Liberal Arts, and Abbi Carney is contributing to the Search Committee for the College of Education and Professional Development. She mentioned that all three committees are expected to complete their work by the end of March.

Brea also reported on the WV Advisory Council of Students, where she represents Marshall University. The Council is advocating for state funding through the Higher Education Health and Aid Grant, which focuses on addressing food insecurity and hygiene insecurity on college campuses across the state.

Excitingly, Brea reported on our February Food Fight against the SBC schools. This is a food drive operating on a point system, and all donations will go to the Marshall University Food Pantry. She also shared that for every five students who donate, she will personally contribute an additional item to the cause.

Amid these efforts, Brea highlighted that students are seeking guidance as we navigate a shifting political landscape. She expressed confidence that with strong leadership and a commitment to the University's values, we will continue to thrive.

Brea concluded by sharing that students are looking forward to their February break next week, and she looks forward to reporting more good news in April.

## **School of Medicine Report**

**Dr. David Gozal**, Dean and Vice President for Health Affairs presented the School of Medicine report. Dr. Gozal reported that the School of Medicine recently welcomed 28 incoming physician assistant students in the Class of 2027. This diverse cohort represents 13 undergraduate colleges and universities. Seventy-nine percent of the students are West Virginia residents, fifty percent are Marshall University graduates, 17.86 percent are first-generation college graduates, and 64.29 percent were raised in communities with populations under 10,000.

He also highlighted the accomplishments of two Physician Assistant alumni, Mary Grace Smiley, PA-C ('23) and Nick Dailey, PA-C ('23), both members of the inaugural class. Smiley is now a physician assistant in hospitalist medicine at Holzer Health System in Gallipolis, Ohio, near her hometown of Point Pleasant, West Virginia. Dailey, a former athletic trainer, transitioned into internal and family medicine and is now practicing at CAMC Greenbrier Valley Medical Center in Lewisburg, West Virginia.

Dr. Gozal continued with a summary of the School of Medicine's research publications from January to December 2024, reporting that 385 articles were published in peer-reviewed journals. Of those

publications, 306 were cited by other research papers, with approximately 31 percent being cited more than once. About 33 percent received online Altmetric attention, indicating engagement through mainstream news, social media, blogs, and public policy documents.

He then provided an update on the Centers of Wellness, stating that the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine has partnered with Marshall University and Marshall Health Network to support four Centers of Wellness focused on addiction medicine and behavioral health, gerontology and healthy aging, obesity and diabetes, and rural health and primary care. Additional efforts planned for 2025 include relocating Marshall Toxicology to Teays Valley and expanding the PROACT model into Mason County. He also noted that the vice dean search for addiction sciences is nearing completion.

Dr. Gozal further reported that the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine has been awarded full reaccreditation for the next four years by the Accreditation Council on Continuous Medical Education (ACCME). This accreditation ensures that the School of Medicine provides education that is relevant to clinicians' needs, evidence-based, evaluated for its effectiveness, and independent of commercial influence.

He also shared that the orthopaedic surgery residency program continues to rank among the top in the country based on in-training exam performance for the fifth consecutive year. Sixty percent of residents scored above the 99th percentile, while 94 percent scored at or above the 90th percentile. Additionally, graduates of the pediatric hospital medicine fellowship program from the classes of 2023 and 2024 achieved a 100 percent board pass rate on their first attempt at the pediatric hospital medicine exam, which is offered every other year.

Dr. Gozal concluded his report by announcing that the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine has been designated a platinum-level "Skin Smart Campus" by the National Council on Skin Cancer Prevention. This recognition highlights the university's commitment to promoting skin health and reducing the risks of skin cancer within its community. The achievement was made possible through the efforts of Rebecca Hicks, a third-year medical student whose dedication and advocacy played a pivotal role in securing the designation.

### **Finance, Audit and Facilities Planning Committee**

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

#### **A) Approval of Proposed Changes to 2024-25 Academic Year Housing Rates**

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approve the proposed changes to the Schedule of Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Tuition and Fee Rates, 2024-25 Academic Year Housing Rates.*

*\* To ensure students are aware of costs in advance and to allow for informed decision-making regarding meal plans and leases at The Landing, the following changes to the fee schedule are proposed: For the Summer 2025 Meal Plan Rate, the previously approved rate was \$700. The proposed rate is \$714. This increase reflects adjustments for summer meal plans that were not fully captured in the prior year's*

rate-setting process. The meal plan includes 19 meals per week for 5 weeks. Landing Rates for May 2025 Occupancy (New Leases}, there is a proposed rate adjustment of approximately 2.5% to reflect inflation and operational cost changes. The proposed monthly rates are as follows: Studio apartments will increase from \$970 to \$995, two-bedroom apartments will increase from \$1,450 to \$1,485, and one bed in a two-bedroom apartment will increase from \$755 to \$ 775. These monthly rates apply to 10-12-month leases.

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

## **B) Approval of Construction of Shewey Deck**

The following resolution was read:

*Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors approves the construction of the new Shewey Deck. The Board further authorizes the President of the University to execute the necessary documents to finalize this project.*

*\* The Capital Project Program Statement noted that proposed funding sources include a \$1M naming rights gift from a respected and valued business entity who will then have the naming rights for the dedicated club space (\$100K annually for 10 years). The proposed financing plan has no investment from Marshall University. Instead, the project will be funded entirely by Athlete Advantage, LLC. This group manages The Thunder Trust, which serves as the NIL collective for Marshall Athletics. This project will not move forward unless a naming rights gift is secured and the Memorandum of Understanding acknowledges that all construction costs will be managed by Athlete Advantage, LLC.*

**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 package, there are updates for:

*Finance Update  
Facilities and Operations Update  
Internal Audit Update  
Annual Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA)  
Assessment & Information Security Update*

## **Athletic Committee**

There were no action items brought forward from the Committee.

### Information Items

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

*Athletic Teams  
NCAA Legislation Updates  
National Issues Updates*

*Athletic Team Update*  
*Budget Update*

## **V. President's Report**

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

## **VI. Executive Session under the authority of WV Code § 6-9A-4**

Upon a motion by Bill Smith, seconded by Jim Smith, the board entered Executive Session under the authority of WV Code §6-9A-4 to discuss Matters involving Commercial Competition Matters and Personnel Matters.

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

## **VII. Chairman Sheils Report**

No Chairman's report was given.

## **VIII. Announcements**

Chairman Sheils announced that a home men's basketball game was scheduled for this evening and encouraged those who were able to attend.

## **IX. Adjournment**

Without objection, the Board Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Kathy D'Antoni, Secretary

<b>President's Update: February 2025</b>
--

**Good afternoon!**

- It is nice to see everyone as we embark on a new calendar year!
- I don't know about you, but I'm done with Winter and I'm ready for Spring!
- Speaking of Spring and the start to this semester, I am filled with optimism about the strides we are making together and the opportunities that lie ahead.
- Today, I want to provide updates on three key areas: **our people**, **our purpose**, and **our perseverance in times of change**.

**Starting with our People: Listening and Acting on Employee Insights**

- Marshall is, and always will be, defined by its people.
- Every member of our campus and community contributes to our success each day.
- Before the break, we completed our **Annual Employee Engagement Survey**, and I am proud to report that the results reflect a growing sense of pride, purpose, and collaboration across our community.
- **Let me recap some of the highlights I shared in my university-wide e-mail before the holiday break:**



- Survey participation increased year-over-year to **66%**, a testament to the trust we are building in this process.
- Year-over-year improvement was also seen across **20 of the 52 dimensions**, with **no notable declines**.
- **83%** of employees feel proud to work at Marshall, and **76%** are motivated to go above and beyond in their roles.
- Compared to our peers in higher education, Marshall scores significantly higher in **18 areas**, including:
  - **Confidence in Marshall's future** (+10 points higher than peers).
  - **Leadership words aligned with actions** (+9 points).
  - **Environment supporting innovation** (+12 points).
  - **Clear direction from senior leaders** (also +12 points).
  - **Marshall making necessary changes to compete effectively** (+14 points).
- While we celebrate these wins, we recognize the need for improvement in the areas of accountability, collaboration and compensation:
  - **Accountability:** Only **45%** feel expectations are set and results tracked effectively.
  - **Collaboration across departments:** **56%** view it positively, with room to grow.
  - **Compensation:** Despite progress, **9 points** below peers in perceptions of fair pay.

- We're not filing away this survey, we're going to continue to take action to strengthen and improve our work environment.
  - **To strengthen accountability:** as we implement our performance management system, we will continue to challenge our leaders to set clear goals, measure progress and to celebrate our success.
    - As we speak, leaders have been tasked with scheduling meetings with employees to discuss these survey results in depth and develop action plans to strengthen and improve.
  - **Breaking Down Silos:** we will continue to implement new ways to foster collaboration and teamwork across all corners of campus.
    - Shared governance is the underpinning of this initiative as continue to advance our recently defined shared governance charter.
  - **Investing in Compensation:** consistent with our multi-year commitment, we will continue to take action to bring pay in line with market standards, with the goal of having all employees paid at 80% or higher of the market midpoint by 2027.
- This journey isn't just about improving scores ... it's about creating a place where every person feels valued, heard, and empowered to do their best work.

- I want to thank our employees for their candor, their commitment, and their care.
- Together, we're building something extraordinary; brick by brick, idea by idea, and heart by heart.

**Which takes me to my second topic – Purpose – as defined in our strategic roadmap, Marshall For All, Marshall Forever.**

- Our university's vision is to inspire learning and creativity that ignites the mind, nurtures the spirit and fulfills the promise of a better future.
- In service to that enduring vision, Marshall plays a critical role as a Prosperity Platform that accelerates individual success, innovative ideas and economic impact.
- Together, we've charted a course to be the most studied and admired institution in the nation, by successfully navigating the secular headwinds impacting higher education ...
- The Marshall For All, Marshall Forever blueprint embraces who we are and who we serve, with roughly half of our students being first generation ... and many coming from socio-economic backgrounds that reflect extreme financial need ... as defined through Pell Eligibility.
- As we know, Pell eligible students tend to lag non-Pell students in measures of student success, with average 6-year graduation rates lagging roughly 20 points lower on a national level.

- The grand challenge we've embraced is to not only navigate secular headwinds impacting higher education, but to do so while serving the students who have historically had the odds stacked against them.
- With **Marshall For All, Marshall Forever**, we seek to level this playing field, and our goal is not just aspirational—it's actionable.
- I am thrilled to share **an update** on the first two cohorts of students participating in this transformative program, demonstrating measurable success compared to their Pell-eligible peers.
- **Performance Metrics include:**
  - The Fall 2024 Marshall For All cohort achieving an **average GPA of 3.08**, significantly higher than the **2.69 average GPA** of Pell-eligible peers.
  - The retention rate for our initial cohort was **79% versus 66%** for Pell-eligible peers, **13 percentage points higher** than their peers, reflecting the program's supportive framework.
- These results highlight the importance of targeted support systems, from financial aid to mentoring, in closing achievement gaps.
- As we look ahead, we will continue to expand the **Marshall For All, Marshall Forever** program to new cohorts, doubling participation by 2026.
- In doing so, we will leverage these insights to refine our broader retention strategies, build partnerships with external

organizations and seek to provide a roadmap for all of higher education to create opportunities for all in the years to come!

**Which takes me to my final topic: Perseverance in times of change.**

- Our strategy is working, and we remain confident in our path forward.
- While we are making measurable progress, we must remain agile and resilient as we navigate the ever-changing landscape in which we operate.
- **Beginning with the fiscal outlook:**
  - President John F. Kennedy once said, “The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.”
  - The sun is shining on Marshall University, so now is the time to plan for all scenarios!
  - As we engage in our FY’26 budget planning process, we have charged the shared governance Budget Advisory Committee to plan for a range of scenarios that might include unexpected headwinds that have not been contemplated.
  - In doing so, they’ve has been tasked to develop a set of options in the event we need to **identify an additional 2% or a 4% reduction in our total budget**, in addition to what is already contemplated in our Save-to-Serve efforts.
  - To be clear, we are not yet facing these scenarios.

- Our efforts to grow enrollment, improve student success and implement thoughtful reductions through our Save-to-Serve initiatives are working.
- But as Mike Tyson famously stated, “everyone has a plan until they’re punched in the face.”
- We want to be prepared for any unanticipated punches!
- **Shifting to ever-changing landscape in NCAA Athletics:**
  - December brought a mix of emotions in our university’s football program ...
    - From the highs of a Sunbelt Championship and the hiring of Coach Tony Gibson,
    - To the lows of our inability to field a team to play in the Radiance Technologies Independence Bowl and the subsequent fallout of that decision.
  - As a university that prides itself in having overcome the tragedy of a plane crash and the unparalleled adversity that resulted, this decision was not taken lightly by anyone involved.
  - While we have publicly recognized and apologized for the impact this decision had on the Sun Belt Conference, our bowl partners, Army, and the broader collegiate football community ...

- All involved have agreed that the ultimate decision to prioritize and protect player safety was the right decision.
- In the period of six days from the Sun Belt Championship to the decision to withdraw from the Independence Bowl invitation, we navigated the departure of Coach Huff and most of his staff, as well as experienced an unprecedented wave of student-athlete departures through the transfer portal.
  - As a result, our player roster was reduced to **41 scholarship players**, with only **23 players having taken a snap since August**.
  - This fell well below the **COVID-era safety threshold of 53 scholarship players**, especially with critical shortages at key skill positions.
- During those six days, we tried desperately to exhaust all avenues to safely field a team, but as the hours passed, our independent medical team informed us that participating in the bowl would compromise the health and safety of our student-athletes.
- Reaching that decision challenged our core values of competitive spirit, player safety and program integrity.
- We have reviewed the circumstances as a university and with the Sunbelt Conference...
  - Captured lessons which will be helpful in future situations ...

- Agreed to a penalty of \$100,000 which the conference has elected to donate to a philanthropy, with no formal reprimand of Marshall University ...
- And together, we have shifted our collective energy into transforming this disappointment into a catalyst for meaningful change by:
  - Advocating for Transfer Portal reform...
  - Coaching Transition protocols ...
  - And developing Minimum Roster Standards to define clear, consistent benchmarks for safe and competitive participation in bowl games.
- While such changes won't happen overnight, Marshall University has once again found itself serving as a case study to inform meaningful change that benefits all ...
- And I'm pleased to report that we have already seen a shift in the Transfer Portal timing, which is encouraging.
- **Which takes me to the shifting political landscape ...**
  - The new year welcomed a new President, a new Governor, and many other elected officials.
  - In recent weeks, several executive orders have been issued at the federal and state levels that impact higher education, including diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.



- Marshall University has been diligently reviewing these orders and engaging with key stakeholders that include:
  - Our University's shared governance representatives,
  - the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC),
  - the Governor's Office,
  - our legislative leaders,
  - and our higher education colleagues across the state.
- As a public institution, we are here to serve our students and the State of West Virginia.
  - Marshall is a place where students, faculty, and staff learn, grow and thrive.
  - In addition, Marshall is an important state partner in addressing challenges and embracing opportunities in our communities, state and nation.
  - Our responsibility is to ensure we honor these ongoing commitments while also complying with the executive orders that have been communicated.
- Unlike some institutions that have recently dismantled DEI divisions in response to legislative directives, Marshall University proactively forecasted potential policy changes in 2023 and executed a structured transition to ensure our programs were repurposed to align with our mission

## of Marshall for All, Marshall Forever.

- As a result, there has been no formal DEI division at the University to "shut down," and our focus has remained on fostering an environment where all students, faculty, and staff have access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.
- Marshall University remains steadfast in our commitment to **merit-based hiring, equal pay for equal work, and compliance with all federal and state laws.**
- Our proactive approach has allowed us to maintain the integrity of our mission with minimal disruption, and we believe this positions Marshall as a leader in **compliance-driven, community-centered excellence.**
- Moving forward, we will continue to make the necessary adjustments and work closely with our campus community to ensure that any additional guidance or executive actions from the federal or state level are met with the same level of **foresight, strategic planning, and institutional alignment** that has characterized this transition.
- **These three examples** ... fiscal scenario planning, the navigation of the evolving landscape in NCAA Athletics, and the execution of new federal and state directives reinforce Marshall's commitment to perseverance ...
- It is important to remind ourselves that for 188 years, Marshall has played a critical role in our community and our state ...

- For nearly two centuries, we have adapted and evolved to fulfill that responsibility in the environments in which we've operated.
- Time after time, we have served as a demonstration project for the nation ...
  - Navigating seemingly intractable challenges ...
  - From Salina Hite Mason and her sisters stepping in during the Civil War to sustain Marshall College ...
  - To our rise from the tragic plane crash in the 1970's to redefine college athletics...
  - We have persevered, and we will continue to do so moving forward ...
- **Wrapping up ...**
  - Our momentum continues to build in our pursuit of academic and athletic excellence ...
  - The external support for Marshall For All, Marshall Forever is increasing daily with exciting announcements soon to be unveiled.
  - We are preparing for the unexpected, and doing so in a strategic and thoughtful manner.

- We will continue to work together to secure a bright future, not only Marshall, but the state that we call home.
- At Marshall University, every voice matters, every action counts, and every moment is an opportunity.
- Thank you for all that you do to help transform this aspiration into reality ...
- And, as always, Go Herd!