

MINUTES
Marshall University Board of Governors
Microsoft Teams Meeting at
Shawkey Dining Room/Memorial Student Center
Livestream and In-Person
October 8, 2025

Present: Kathy D’Antoni, Kathy Eddy, Carlene O’Neill, Samuel Moore, Robin Riner, Geoff Sheils, Bill Smith, Connor Waller

PH: Ginny T. Lee, Donnie Holcomb, Rusty Webb

Absent: Shawn Ball, Kipp Bodnar, Angel Moore, Chad Pennigton, Jim Smith

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 Kathy Eddy, the minutes of the regular meeting held on August 5th, 2025, were approved.

III. Committee Meeting Reports

Academic and Student Affairs

There were no action items brought forward from the Committee. Prior to the committee reports, Dr. Kathy D’Antoni took the opportunity to recognize the inaugural honorees of the newly launched Faculty Recognition Program to honor exceptional academic and research achievements. The two honorees were Ross Salary and Kacy Lovelace.

Ross Salary, Associate Professor of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering, who has made significant contributions to engineering research, student mentorship, and academic excellence. His work encompasses computational fluid dynamics, 3D-printed bone scaffolds, and parametric design, with publications in leading journals and presentations at major national conferences.

Kacy Lovelace, Associate Professor and Research and Student Success Librarian, who was awarded a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Doctoral Network Fellowship at Glasgow Caledonian University. She earned her MLS and M.A. in Library & Information Science and is also a certified Innovation Catalyst. Kacy was recognized for her academic excellence, scholarship, and innovative contributions to student engagement and the ethical integration of AI.

Provost Report

Interim Provost Robert Bookwalter gave the Provost's Update. During his report, Provost Bookwalter began by thanking Dr. D'Antoni for creating an opportunity to highlight some of the exceptional work taking place across Academic Affairs. He then shared a series of updates and achievements from the various colleges and divisions within the university.

In the College of Arts and Media, Provost Bookwalter reported that WMUL-FM's "5:00 p.m. Edition of Newscenter 88," which aired on October 31, 2024, received a 2025 Edward R. Murrow National Student Award for Audio Newscast. The thirty-minute program featured students Peyton Cisco as producer, Emma Johnson and Waylon Smith as anchors, Emily Grady covering weather, and Nate Courtney reporting on sports.

In the College of Engineering and Computer Science, he noted that Marshall University celebrated the tenth anniversary of the Arthur Weisberg Family Applied Engineering Complex (WAEC) on August 25. Named in honor of regional business leader and benefactor Arthur Weisberg, who passed away in 2012, the complex houses all undergraduate and graduate engineering and computer science programs. The facility continues to serve as a modern, collaborative environment for learning and innovation. Provost Bookwalter also highlighted the accomplishments of Dylan Lester, an undergraduate student in Electrical Engineering, who received a NASA West Virginia Space Grant Consortium Undergraduate Fellowship in the amount of \$5,000 for his project titled "Training YOLO Models with Assisted Labeling Techniques and RGB-D Fusion." Dylan also received a Marshall University Undergraduate Creative Discovery and Research Scholar Award for Fall 2025 for his project "A Reinforcement Learning-Based Algorithm for Labeled Data Generation."

In the College of Education and Professional Development, Provost Bookwalter announced the launch of a new Master of Arts in Applied Behavior Analysis program under the leadership of Dr. Sadie Lovett. The program will begin in Spring 2026 and will provide new opportunities for future educators. He also discussed a partnership between the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) and the College of Education, which supports twenty freshmen and sophomores from rural West Virginia who aspire to become educators. A key initiative of this partnership is the "To, Through, and Beyond" Summer Bridge Program, held on August 11 and 12, 2025, on Marshall's campus. This immersive two-day experience was designed to welcome and equip future teachers as they embark on their academic journey.

In the College of Health Professions, he shared that the School of Physical Therapy achieved a 93.6 percent first-time pass rate on the National Physical Therapy Exam, ranking first in West Virginia and twenty-third nationally, surpassing the national average and reflecting the program's academic strength and dedication to student success.

In the College of Liberal Arts, Provost Bookwalter recognized several faculty members for their outstanding achievements during the 2024–2025 academic year. Dr. John Young from the Department of English received the Charles E. Hedrick Outstanding Faculty Award. Dr. Hilary Brewster, also from English, received the Marshall and Shirley Reynolds Outstanding Teacher Award. Dr. Sara Henning from English and Dr. Molly Mersmann from History were honored with the Pickens-Queen Teacher Awards. Dr. Cat Pleska from English received the Council of Chairs Award for Excellence in Teaching, and Dr. Marybeth Beller from Political Science was recognized with a Faculty Distinguished Service Award.

In the College of Science, he announced that the National Science Foundation awarded a \$568,000 grant to Drs. Shin Moteki and Scott Day for their project on renewable polymer-based catalysts, which will provide valuable research opportunities for West Virginia students in polymer and chemical

research. Additionally, Drs. Leslie Frost, Rosalyn Quinones, and colleagues received a \$530,000 NSF Major Research Instrumentation grant for the purchase of an Orbitrap Exploris 240 mass spectrometer to be housed in the College of Science. This advanced research instrument will significantly enhance research capabilities across multiple disciplines, including organic chemistry, biochemistry, forensics, and pharmaceuticals.

In the Division of Aviation, Provost Bookwalter reported that Marshall Aviation received final approval for dispatch training from the Federal Aviation Administration regional office in July. This approval allows the dispatcher courses to develop into micro credential offerings and eventually become part of a full degree program. Evening classes for certification are planned to begin this fall.

In the Lewis College of Business, he noted that MBA student Jamison Lewis was selected as the first-ever recipient of the West Virginia Higher Education Student Action and Impact Award. Jamison received this honor at the 2025 West Virginia Student Success Summit held in July. The award recognizes a West Virginia student leader whose efforts inspire others to pursue their own leadership potential.

In the School of Pharmacy, Provost Bookwalter shared that the program received a \$19,400 grant from Walgreens to expand the “Wellness by Walgreens” program for the 2025–2026 academic year. This new funding builds upon a partnership launched in 2023 that supports the physical, mental, and financial wellness of student pharmacists while increasing preventive health education in underserved West Virginia communities. The expanded program will empower students to deliver critical health education in regions where rates of diabetes and hypertension are 23 percent higher than national averages, addressing both burnout among student pharmacists and regional health disparities.

In Online Education, Marshall University was selected as one of twenty-five institutions nationwide to participate in the inaugural National LER Accelerator Cohort to Advance Digital Credentialing. This initiative seeks to expand flexible learning experiences and ensure that students have access to the credentials needed for future employability. Marshall Online’s participation will focus on integrating credit and non-credit learning experiences, developing flexible credentialing models, and creating quality assurance frameworks to strengthen the education-to-workforce pipeline. Finally, he shared that the Department of Communication Studies has received approval to offer its bachelor’s degree program fully online, expanding the number of degree programs available through Marshall Online.

Student Representative Report

Connor Waller, Student Body President, gave the Student Representative update. Connor provided an update on behalf of the student body. He began by thanking the Board for the opportunity to share recent updates and expressed his appreciation for the continued collaboration between students, administration, and the Board of Governors.

Connor reported that the fall semester began successfully with a well-executed Week of Welcome, which introduced new students to the Marshall family through a variety of events. Activities included Convocation, President Smith’s leadership class, Build-a-Bison, and several opportunities for new students to engage directly with current student leaders. He emphasized that these efforts were designed to ensure that students were prepared for a successful semester from the moment they stepped into their first class.

From a budgetary standpoint, Connor noted that, despite minor budget cuts, SGA was able to maintain its annual commitment of \$20,000 in funding for student organizations. As of the date of the

meeting, \$6,000 had already been distributed to more than twelve student organizations, and numerous additional funding requests were still under review.

Connor went on to highlight SGA's efforts in community service and collaboration, particularly its participation in the 9/11 Days of Service in partnership with the Office of Student Affairs. Students volunteered in multiple capacities, including organizing communication efforts for the events, hosting a memorial ceremony in honor of Marshall alumnus Dr. Paul Ambrose, and packing meals for local shelters. Connor stated that this type of service embodies the values and spirit of the Marshall family.

On the topic of alumni and donor engagement, Connor announced that SGA has partnered with Marshall's Alumni Office to host a new fundraising event titled "Dancing With the Herd." The event will take place on the evening of December 4th and will raise funds for several university programs and initiatives, including Marshall for All, Marshall Forever. He shared that the participants will include President Brad D. Smith and First Lady Alys Smith, along with Athletic Director Gerald Harrison.

Connor also discussed student involvement in university leadership searches, noting that over the past few weeks, students have been actively engaged in the Provost and Dean searches. He explained that students have played a meaningful role in discussions with each candidate, ensuring that the student perspective remains an essential part of every decision-making process.

In closing, Connor addressed the importance of shared governance. He shared that students have worked closely with the Provost's Office to ensure collaboration remains central to the decision-making process. He reflected on the Shared Governance Conference organized by Dr. Robin Reiner, describing it as an excellent and informative event. Connor stated that hearing from representatives of various areas within the university underscored how shared governance has shaped both Marshall University and the individuals involved in the process.

Connor concluded by expressing gratitude to the Board of Governors and University administration for their continued commitment to collaboration, transparency, and shared governance, describing this partnership as one of Marshall University's greatest strengths.

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 spoke on the introduction and adoption of the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine's new mission statement, which states:

"We are empowering the future of medicine by elevating education, driving discovery, and championing wellness throughout Appalachia and beyond."

He noted that the development of the mission and values was guided by the Faculty Council's Mission Statement Committee under the leadership of Faculty Council Chair, Dr. Michelle Worthy. Committee members included three additional faculty members and medical students. He explained that the group then engaged all stakeholders across the school to gather input, resulting in a final product that reflects a broad and inclusive perspective.

On the education front, he highlighted significant growth in prospective student interest in the School of Medicine. As shown in the graphs provided, applications increased from 1,861

in 2023 to nearly 4,500 for the 2026 entering class. He also noted that class sizes have expanded and received approval, with over 99 students beginning their training in medicine, compared to smaller numbers in previous years.

Dr. Gozal also spoke about the establishment of the one-year Medical Science Certificate Program launched by the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine to help West Virginia students strengthen their academic foundation and competitiveness for medical school. The 16-credit curriculum covers core pre-clerkship sciences including biochemistry, physiology, microbiology, immunology, and pharmacology. Students who earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher and an MCAT score of at least 505 qualify for early interview consideration in the School of Medicine's admissions cycle.

He further reported that the School of Medicine received initial accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) to establish a new anesthesiology residency program. This four-year program was approved for a full complement of 16 resident physicians and will provide comprehensive clinical training in all aspects of anesthesiology. There were 80 applicants for four available spots.

Additionally, beginning in Fall 2026, the School of Medicine, in collaboration with the College of Liberal Arts, will offer a dual-degree program allowing medical students to earn both a Doctor of Medicine and a Master of Arts in Communication Studies (Health Communication) within the standard four-year MD timeline. Designed with flexible course formats, including online, hybrid, and summer sessions, the program integrates seamlessly with the medical school curriculum. The Health Communication track will equip future physicians with the skills to communicate effectively with patients, lead teams, and navigate today's social media-driven healthcare environment.

He also reported that the Rural General Surgery Residency Program at the Marshall Community Health Consortium has successfully advanced from Initial Accreditation to Continued Accreditation by the ACGME. This milestone affirms the program's strength in providing high-quality surgical training tailored to the unique needs of rural communities.

It was also reported that the AAMC Graduation Questionnaire (GQ), a national survey completed by graduating medical students to evaluate their educational experiences, continues to serve as an important tool for assessing strengths and identifying opportunities for improvement. Dr. Gozal stated in his written report that the School of Medicine had focused on Areas of Success and Areas of Opportunity, noting five-year trends that demonstrate diligent progress as the school continues its march toward LCME accreditation in 2027.

Among the areas of improvement, overall satisfaction increased by seven percentage points, clinical integration of basic science by 10 points, pre-clerkship clinical relevance by 12 points, surgery clerkship satisfaction by 16 points, career planning by 15 points, and student health insurance by 18 points. He acknowledged, however, that some areas, such as the provision of mental health services, had declined. He emphasized that substantial attention and changes will be made to ensure students have better access to stress management resources and burnout support, recognizing the intense demands of four years of medical study.

Dr. Gozal also noted that the School of Medicine has partnered with Lecturio, a leading online medical education platform, to enhance student learning. Lecturio offers high-quality video lectures, AI-driven concept pages, quiz banks, practice exams, and interactive cases that reinforce classroom instruction and strengthen clinical reasoning. Students will also gain access to the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) Healer, an immersive simulation tool that builds diagnostic and decision-making skills through realistic patient scenarios. This platform is seamlessly integrated with Lecturio's resources.

To further support research, the school has added Covidence, the gold-standard software for conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses. This addition provides students with valuable experience in evidence-based medicine and strengthens their residency applications.

Dr. Gozal highlighted that Marshall Health Network (MHN) celebrated the grand opening of its new Teays Pavilion on August 19 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The 14,700-square-foot facility expands access to specialized outpatient care, including dermatology, neurology, and, for the first time in Putnam County, occupational health and toxicology services.

He also reported that Wei Li, MD, PhD, FAHA, associate professor of biomedical sciences at the School of Medicine, has been awarded a Research Project Grant (R01), one of the most competitive grants issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The four-year, \$1.96 million grant (1R01HL177493-01A1) will investigate mechanisms driving increased risk of thrombosis in patients with heart failure and fluctuating sex hormone levels, focusing on how the sodium/potassium ATPase (NKA) protein regulates platelet activation and contributes to blood clot formation.

He further noted that the School hosted a retirement celebration for Cindy Warren, long-time Assistant Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. Cindy joined the School of Medicine in 1977 and has welcomed every class of students since. Her service to Marshall spans 50 years, and more than 100 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends joined together on September 13 to celebrate her remarkable career and retirement.

It was also reported that about 175 medical alumni, family members, and friends participated in the 38th Annual Homecoming and Reunion Weekend, held September 12–13. Events included continuing medical education lectures, a banquet for milestone reunion classes, and a tailgate party. Approximately 75 medical students also joined alumni for the learning lectures and a networking luncheon.

Dr. Gozal also stated that the School of Medicine had the honor of recognizing Dr. Sharon Frey as the 2025 Distinguished Alumni. Dr. Frey has built a career that has shaped global vaccine science and public health. As Emerita Professor of the Center for Vaccine Development, Kinsella Endowed Chair in Internal Medicine, and Associate Director of Clinical Research at Saint Louis University School of Medicine, she has led pivotal clinical trials for COVID-19, monkeypox, and other emerging infectious diseases, advancing health and saving lives worldwide.

He also reported that the School of Medicine hosted its flagship fundraiser, Standing Out in Our Field, on August 23 at Barboursville Soccer Complex. The 10th annual event raised more than \$120,000 for the school's medical student scholarship endowment. Over 500 guests enjoyed

the Viva Las Vegas-themed outdoor dining experience featuring music by Santa Cruz, dancing, and a gourmet menu by Cabell Huntington Hospital's Executive Chef Don Sallada. More than 100 current and future medical students volunteered as servers. Over the past decade, the event has raised nearly \$1 million for student scholarships.

Dr. Gozal added that he and Scott Raynes, President and CEO of Marshall Health Network, took the stage together during the WV Chamber Annual Meeting and Business Summit on August 28 to discuss innovation, collaboration, and how Marshall is leading the future of healthcare across the state.

In closing, he announced that the annual Research Day will take place on November 3, describing it as a wonderful venue. He noted that although submissions have not yet closed, the number of abstracts has already surpassed all previous records, with over 180 submissions received. The event will feature numerous student and resident presentations from the School of Medicine and other health professions.

This year's keynote speaker will be Dr. Lynn Schnapp, Chair of the Department of Medicine at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Schnapp is a physician-scientist of the highest caliber, funded by multiple NIH grants, and will contribute to both the basic, translational, and implementation science of lung disease. Dr. Gozal concluded by expressing enthusiasm for her presentation and pride in the collaborative research efforts of Marshall's students and faculty.

Finance, Audit and Facilities Planning Committee

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

A) Authorization of the Reallocation of Funds from the State Institutions of Higher Education Deferred Maintenance Grant Program

The following resolution was read:

Resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors authorize reallocation of funds from the State Institution of Higher Education Deferred Maintenance Grant program for projects described below. Furthermore, the Board of Governors reaffirm its commitment to prioritize deferred maintenance projects at Marshall University and to ensure the necessary funding for this project to be completed safely and effectively; and The Board of Governors authorize the President to execute any documentation necessary to execute any documentation necessary to effectuate the reallocation of funds for the above-listed project as part of the deferred maintenance program.

** In June 2023, the Board of Governors approved the submission of thirty-one (31) deferred maintenance projects under the State Institutions of Higher Education Deferred Maintenance Grant program.*

Some of Marshall's projects came in under budget; therefore, staff now seeks authorization to reallocate funding for a project, as follows:

Reallocate \$132,003 from Morrow Library ADA Upgrades (WVHEPC-M-010) and \$23,997 from MRI Building HVAC Replacement (WVHEPC-M-017) to Stormwater Improvements

Phase I (WVHEPC-M-016) to address unexpected underground utility conflicts, sewer line obstructions, and manhole repairs encountered during construction.

Reallocate \$28,000 from MRI Building HVAC Replacement (WVHEPC-M-017) to Holderby Hall Demolition (WVHEPC-M-014) for unexpected costs from State mandated supplemental bonds and drainage improvements along College Avenue.

Reallocate \$41,250 from MRI Building HVAC Replacement (WVHEPC-M-017) to Roof Replacement (WVHEPC-M-025) for additional costs due to expanded scope and the unexpected discovery of built-up roofing beneath the existing system

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

B) Approval of Investment Portfolio Strategy for Marshall University and the Marshall University School of Medicine

The following resolution was read:

Whereas, the Marshall University Board of Governors (“Board”) is vested with the authority to oversee and approve investment strategies for Marshall University and its affiliated entities, including the Marshall University School of Medicine, pursuant to West Virginia Code §12-1-12d;

Whereas, the Marshall University Foundation (“Foundation”) serves as the fiduciary and investment steward for certain University and School of Medicine assets;

Whereas, the Foundation has engaged Meketa Investment Group (“Meketa”) as its investment manager to provide strategic guidance and oversight of the investment portfolio;

Whereas, Meketa has presented a comprehensive investment portfolio strategy designed to support the long-term financial sustainability, growth, and mission-aligned objectives of Marshall University and the Marshall University School of Medicine;

Whereas, the Board has reviewed the proposed strategy and finds it to be prudent, diversified, and consistent with the University’s financial goals and fiduciary responsibilities;

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Marshall University Board of Governors hereby approves the investment portfolio strategy as recommended by Meketa and endorsed by the Marshall University Foundation;

Be it further resolved, that the Board authorizes the Foundation and Meketa to implement the strategy and make necessary adjustments in accordance with prevailing market conditions and best practices, subject to ongoing reporting and oversight by the Board;

Be it further resolved, that this resolution shall be entered into the official minutes of the Board and shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Upon a motion by Kathy Eddy, seconded by Kathy D'Antoni, 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

There were no action items brought forward from the Committee.

Information Items

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

NCAA Legislation

National Issues Updates

Athletic Team Updates

Budget Update

Capital Projects Updates

IV. President's Report

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

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

Upon a motion by Kathy D'Antoni, seconded by Kathy Eddy, the board entered Executive Session under the authority of WV Code §6-9A-4 to discuss Matters involving Commercial Competition and Personnel Matters.

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

VI. Chairman Sheils Report

Chairman Sheils expressed appreciation for another meaningful and productive Board meeting, thanking everyone who helped organize the session and prepare the reports. He highlighted the Provost's presentation, noting that while only a portion of the material was discussed, the depth and scope of the information provided in the Board packets were impressive. He commented that there seemed to be a renewed sense of energy throughout the committee meetings and shared that he was genuinely impressed with the level of engagement and progress observed.

Chairman Sheils extended special recognition to Dr. Robin Reiner for organizing the Shared Governance Conference held the previous day. He stated that the event was informative and meaningful, providing valuable insight into how representatives from across Marshall University experienced the shared governance process and how it shaped both the institution and the individuals involved. He also expressed gratitude to Carlene O'Neill and Connor Waller for their continued efforts and leadership in shared governance, acknowledging that while the Board of Governors does not directly draft or implement decisions, individuals like them are "in the trenches" doing the work that supports the governance process.

He then shared several announcements, including that the 2025 West Virginia Board of Governors Summit will take place on October 29–30 at the Charleston Civic Center and that attendance will provide ten hours of training credit with certificates available. He also noted that Fall Break begins tomorrow and encouraged everyone to enjoy the upcoming days off. Chairman Sheils reminded members of the Marshall University Foundation event scheduled for Friday evening and the home football game on Saturday. He concluded by noting that the next Board of Governors meeting will be held on December 3, 2025, ten days prior to Winter Commencement and one day before the annual Dance-Off event.

Chairman Sheils closed his report by expressing gratitude to the Board members, administrators, and staff for their continued dedication, engagement, and contributions to the success of Marshall University.

VII. Announcements

VIII. Adjournment

Without objection, the Board Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy D'Antoni, Secretary

President's Report – October 2025

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman ... good afternoon.
- It has been an exciting and eventful start to the academic year!
- Since our Board meeting in August, we've stayed focused on:
 - Strengthening enrollment and student success,
 - While navigating external events and headwinds to ensure we remain on track to achieve our strategic and financial goals.
 - Along the way, we've continued to advance our efforts to fill key leadership positions.
- As a result, I want to focus my report on these three areas, beginning with our efforts to strengthen enrollment and student success:
 - While the official census numbers won't be confirmed until October 15th, our Fall 2025 enrollment currently reflect a 3rd consecutive year of enrollment increases.
 - As of today, total student enrollment is on-pace to increase nearly 8% year-over-year, which is up 20% over the past three years ... having reversed a decade-plus decline.
 - Full-time, first-time freshmen have grown 5.4% year-over-year, up 24% over the past three years.
 - As we navigate the demographic cliff nationally with shrinking high school classes, our implementation of a strategic enrollment management plan several years ago is paying off.

- For example, our decision to expand our Metro tuition rates and catchment area to include a 150-mile radius into Ohio and Kentucky has produced Metro enrollment increases of 19.1% this year, and more than 60% the past three years.
- As we've embraced an on-demand option to deliver our curriculum, whether through face-to-face or hybrid learning environments, online enrollment (or what we refer to as distance learners) has grown 24.3% year-over-year, and is *also* up more than 60% the past three years.
- I'm delighted with the collective campus's efforts in producing these results.
- However, we recognize it is only getting more difficult as we enter then depths of the enrollment cliff beginning next Fall ... a cliff which will persist for the next decade according to demographic data.
- So, there's no off-season ... we're already working on next Fall's enrollment, with 75 high school and college fair events on the books and innovative new approaches to inspiring and recruiting students to join the Herd!
- Once we have these students on campus, our commitment to strengthen student success remains our top priority.
- 1st year retention rates are currently at 76.4%, an improvement from last year's 72.2% retention ... reflecting the amazing work of our Student Success teams and faculty across the campus.
- I want to thank our campus community for their efforts to remain focused on growing enrollment and student success.

- This is the “power of we” in action.
- Which takes me to my second topic ... navigating external events and headwinds to ensure we remain on track to achieve our strategic and financial goals.
 - The headwinds we face are not only demographic, they include larger geopolitical and socio-economic issues that impact our campus community each and every day.
 - As a result, we must remain vigilant and thoughtful about how we navigate these events, ensuring we serve as a role model for what is possible for the rest of the world.
 - This was once again tested in recent weeks as a result of the fatal shooting of Charlie Kirk.
 - The event and all that transpired has been deeply disturbing, and regardless of political affiliation, many are experiencing sadness, outrage, confusion, or fear.
 - There is no question regarding the gravity of what occurred or the strong emotions that have followed in its wake ... including statements, actions and terminations that continue to reverberate in the media and on college campuses across the country.
 - We’ve engaged in helping our campus and community process these events and constructively move forward together.
 - At Marshall University, we remain steadfast in:
 - Our support of the first amendment rights afforded to each of us as private citizens,

- To preserving and protecting academic freedom for our faculty,
 - And to aspiring to role model the values expressed in **Our Creed** ... respect, reasoned discourse, and integrity among them.
 - These values, written by our campus community more than a quarter century ago, guide us to treat human life and human dignity with seriousness, and especially when we disagree or are deeply wounded by what has happened.
- Our University does not take positions on political issues, which is why we have not released any public statements.
 - However, our Creed expresses our shared commitment as a campus community to being a responsible, safe, well, and judicious community, “one that remains vigilant against hatred, intolerance, and injustice, and actively works to correct them.”
 - As such, we do not condone violence, threats, or the celebration of violence.
 - As employees of this storied institution, we have a unique responsibility ... to serve as role models, leaders, and caretakers for students & our community.
 - What we say and what we do matters.
 - We recognize that a public employee speaking in the context of a private citizen enjoys first amendment protection for speech.

- When it comes to personal social media accounts, media interviews or other public venues, an employee's association with Marshall University can become intertwined.
- So, when making statements on political or social issues in these settings, employees must be explicit in their statement that they are speaking as a private citizen and not on behalf of the University.
- As a result, we are actively reviewing our policies and web pages to ensure any necessary language refinements are made.
- As a university, we remain committed to maintaining a campus climate where all feel valued and are able to express their views responsibly.
- I am humbled by our campus community for caring about one another, and for doing their part to uphold the humane, respectful community we aspire to see in the world.
- Which takes me to my 3rd and final point, our efforts to fill key leadership positions.
 - Starting with our Provost search ... the quantity and quality of candidates has been very encouraging.
 - As you may recall, we purposefully used the summer to market this opportunity, awaiting the return of our campus community before beginning interviews.
 - Over the summer, we received 95 applications!
 - The Search Committee narrowed this list to the 15 most qualified candidates who participated in virtual interviews

September 4-5th.

- And we invited 5 finalists to campus the week of September 12th to engage with our campus community.
 - We have reached agreement on an offer with our next Provost, and will be making a public announcement in the coming days.
 - In addition to our search for our next Provost, we've also been actively engaged in recruiting our next Dean for our College of Liberal Arts which has followed a parallel process and timeline.
 - We have narrowed the candidate pool to 3 finalists who were invited to campus last week, and earlier this week.
 - Our goal will be to name our next Dean for the College of Liberal Arts in the coming weeks ...
 - And both our next Provost and our new Dean for COLA will be joining us with start dates in calendar year 2026.
- Wrapping up ...
 - In a complicated world of shifting demographics, division and disagreement ... we remain committed to our shared purpose of Marshall for All, Marshall Forever ...
 - Central to this strategy is maintaining a campus climate where all feel valued and able to express their views responsibly...
 - While ensuring the financial viability of the institution long term ...

- As a result, we are adhering to our enduring financial principles ... to grow students, not fees ... invest in our team ... take care of the house ... and manage our strategic resources to eliminate our structural deficit.
- Together, we are demonstrating what's possible when you commit to creating an environment where top talent can do the best work of their lives ... in service to others ... working hard every day to increase prosperity for our students, our community and our state.
- Simply stated ... we are transforming our dream of Marshall for All, Marshall Forever into reality, and in doing so, we are not only changing lives ... we are strengthening family trees for generations to come!
- And with that, Mr. Chairman, I'll conclude my comments, and will be happy to take any questions.