QUORUM = 28

Marshall University Faculty Senate
Meeting Agenda
Thursday, September 24, 2026, 4:00 – 5:30pm
MSC DMR/Microsoft Teams

1. Approval of Proposed Agenda
2. Approval of Faculty Senate Minutes from September 3, 2026
3. Chair Announcements – Chair
4. Recommendations/Resolutions - None
5. Regular Reports
    a) President – Brad Smith (15 minutes)
    b) Provost – Diane Helfers Petrella (15 minutes)
    c) Board of Governors – Robin Riner (5 minutes)
    d) Advisory Council of Faculty – Amine Oudghiri-Otmani (5 minutes)
    e) Graduate Council – Richard Egleton (5 minutes)
    f) Student Government Association – Alissa Davis (5 minutes)
6. Standing Committee Liaison Reports
    a) Government Affairs Committee – Chair/Liaison (4 minutes)
    b) University Curriculum Committee – Chair/ Liaison (4 minutes)
    c) Faculty Personnel Committee – Billy Gardner, Jr. (4 minutes)
    d) Research Committee – Shane Welch (4 minutes)
    e) Student Conduct & Welfare Committee – Marianna Linz (4 minutes)
    f) Faculty Technology Committee – Chair/Liaison (4 minutes)
7. Other Requests to Speak
8. Adjournment

Marshall University Faculty Senate

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 3, 2026, 4:00 PM

MSC Don Morris Room (Microsoft Teams Streaming Only)

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sarah McDermott, Heather Stark, Leah Turley, Phil Vallejo, Sandy York, Jamey Halleck, Kevin Levine, Amamda Thompon-Abbott, Uday Tate, Boniface Yemba, Lanai Jennings-Knotts, Conrae Lucas-Adkins, Tim Melvin, Jerica Wesley, Ammar Alzarad, Ross Salary, Ananya Jana, Pingping Zhu, Zach Garrett, Angela Graham, Lisa Muto, Alysha Nichols, Laura Stephens, Marybeth Beller, Puspa Damai, Shoshannah Diehl, Marianna Linz, Megan Marshall, Dalton Monk, Boniface Noyongoyo, Josh Williams, Jana Tigchelaar, Antony Viola, Raid Al-Aqtash, Kelly Beatty, Rick Gage, Billy Gardner, Philippe Georgel, Herman Mays, Sean McBride, Shane Welch, Jim Denvir, Raj Khanna, Ruhul Amin, Mindy Varney, Kari Mika-Lude, Heather Lauer, Eryn Roles

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Huesmann, Sujoy Bose, Shikeal Harris, Suzanne Konz, Sara Henning, Sudipta Chowdhury, Alysha Nichols, Sara Henning, Jessica Buerck, Bryan Burk (substitute), Chatrawee Shepard (substitute), Jinju Wang (substitute), Tiffany Davis, Hasan Koc (substitute), Jen Sparks (substitute)

EX-OFFICIO, VOTING/NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT: Alissa Davis, Richard Egleton, Amine Oudghiri-Otmani

EX-OFFICIO, VOTING/NON-VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:

PARLIAMENTARIAN: Andrew Morelock

SENATE STAFF: Hailey Bibbee

GUESTS: In-person - D. Scott Davis, Karen McComas, Brian Morgan, Chris Morrow, Carl Mummert, Julia Spears, Brandi Jacobs-Jones, Jerry Ross, David Dampier, Kateryna Schray, Kelly Bradley, Rohan Christie-David, Maria Gindhart, Jodie Penrod, Mohammad Abdulrahman
Virtual - Brad Smith, Diane Petrella, Niki Rowe-Fortner, Lindsey Harper, Susan Tusing, Ginny Painter, Gretchen Beach, Vicki Stroeher, Sonja Cantrell-Johnson, Eric Blough, Bruce Felder, Matt Tidd, Eric Himes, Allison Carey, Cicero Fain, Jim Harris, Anna Mummert, Craig Kimble

The meeting was convened at 4:00 p.m. by Chair Rick Gage. Chair Gage reviewed meeting procedures and expectations.

1. Approval of Proposed Agenda – approved
2. Approval of Minutes from April 23, 2026 - approved
3. Announcements - Chair
    a. **Welcome and Acknowledgments –** The Chair welcomed new and returning senators and thanked them for their service to Marshall University, their academic units, and the Faculty Senate. The Chair introduced himself as faculty from the College of Science and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve as Faculty Senate Chair.

b. **Chair's Priorities for the Academic Year –** Outlined four guiding priorities for the Faculty Senate: Communication, Transparency, Collaboration, and Follow-Through.

c. **Chair's Vision for Faculty Senate –** Emphasized that senators should be informed about university activities and decisions, feel that their concerns are heard and addressed meaningfully, be connected to shared governance processes, and work collaboratively across colleges and units to advance the university's success.

d. **Emerging Topics and Issues –**

   i. **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is expected to be a major topic during the academic year. Anticipated areas of discussion include AI use by students and faculty, AI-enabled technologies, new university AI tools and implementations, surveillance and privacy concerns, and university AI policy development.

   ii. **BOG AA-17 Faculty Conduct Policy** has been signed, posted on the university website, and is now in effect. The Chair noted that the policy had been approved by the Board of Governors and that additional revisions may be considered in the future if needed.

   iii. **Strategic Planning** will continue through the university's revised "plan on a page" process. Senators were reminded to complete the strategic planning survey by October 1 to provide feedback.

e. **Senate Business and Upcoming Dates –**

   i. **Committee Liaison Appointments** remain a priority. Senators interested in serving as standing committee liaisons were asked to complete the survey or contact the Senate.

   ii. **Commencement Speaker and Honorary Degree Process** will begin soon, with additional information forthcoming regarding speaker selection and honorary degree nominations.

   iii. **Upcoming Faculty Senate Dates** included the next Faculty Senate meeting on September 24 at 4:00 p.m.; the Executive Committee meeting on September 14; the deadline for recommendations and resolutions on September 4; and the Fall General Faculty Meeting on October 1 at 4:00 p.m. in the Joan C. Edwards Playhouse.

   iv. **Employee Appreciation Athletic Events** included football on September 12, men's soccer on September 22, volleyball on September 24, and women's soccer on October 4.

4. Parliamentary Procedures Primer – Chair/Parliamentarian – With the assistance of Recording Secretary and Senator Mindy Varney, Chair Rick Gage and Parliamentarian Andrew Morelock demonstrated common mistakes with Robert's Rules of Order and the proper way to proceed in the future.
5. Recommendations/Resolutions - None
6. Regular Reports

a. President – Brad Smith (15 minutes)

i. **Opening Remarks and Campus Recognition –** President Smith expressed appreciation for the opportunity to serve with the Faculty Senate and noted that Marshall University had recently been showcased for leadership in education, economic development, and AI. He also recognized the induction of Verna Gibson, a Marshall alumna and one of the first female CEOs of a Fortune 500 organization, into the West Virginia Business Hall of Fame.

ii. **Return to Campus and Student Welcome –** President Smith noted the strong energy surrounding the start of the academic year and reported that Marshall welcomed more than 1,900 students.

iii. **Campus Challenges and Response –** President Smith acknowledged recent challenges, including the temporary displacement of several Greek community members following safe housing inspections by the State Fire Marshal and interrupted network service as students, faculty, and staff returned to campus. He commended the campus community for working together to support affected students and stated that questions regarding IT and network concerns would be addressed with Chief Information Officer Jody Penrod.

iv. **Marshall for All, Marshall Forever –** President Smith reviewed progress under the Marshall for All, Marshall Forever strategy, noting that the plan has contributed to enrollment growth, deficit reduction, faculty and staff pay investments, increased national visibility, economic impact, and stronger alumni and elected-leader support.

v. **Three-Phase Transformation Strategy –**
1. **Optimize for Sustainability** focused on long-term financial stability through efforts such as Save to Serve, the incentivized budget model, and strategic enrollment management. President Smith reported that these efforts have significantly reduced the university's deficit.
2. **Transform to Lead with Best Practices** focused on access, affordability, student mentorship, online courses, career pathways, direct high school admissions, revised articulation agreements, expanded metro borders, micro-credentials, and the Advanced Manufacturing Center. President Smith reported that enrollment has grown 24% over the last four years, outpacing peers.
3. **Become a National Best-Practice Model** remains an aspirational next phase, with Marshall for All's debt-free program serving 620 students and showing strong student outcomes. President Smith noted

that the first cohort is on track for a four-year graduation rate that may substantially exceed comparable Pell-eligible graduation rates.

vi. **Planning for the Next Chapter –** President Smith stated that the university is refreshing its "plan on a page" following a spring listening tour that included 30 stops and engagement with approximately 1,000 people. He emphasized the need for Marshall to remain agile, adaptive, relevant, and resilient in response to changes.

vii. **Enrollment, Retention, and Financial Outlook –** President Smith reported that fall enrollment is approximately flat when excluding dual enrollment and a little over 3% higher when including dual enrollment. He noted that the university had budgeted for 1% headcount growth excluding dual enrollment and that retention declined from approximately 76% to the 72% range.

viii. **Current Work Streams –**

1. **Budget Advisory Committee** met regularly during the spring and summer and identified possible actions if enrollment fell short of expectations.
2. **Huron Consulting** was engaged to assess operational effectiveness and efficiency on the staff side and will also examine the academic side through January.
3. **Student Success Action Learning Team** developed recommendations to support the university's goal of reaching 80% retention.
4. **AI Strategy Work** included workshops with university leadership, the Board of Governors, deans, department chairs, Student Government, and the AI Operating Committee, with related policy work continuing.
5. **Transparency and Plan Refresh Timeline –** President Smith stated that the university will share findings and proposals transparently, seek campus input, make necessary decisions, and refresh Marshall's plan on a page by December to guide the next three to five years.
6. **Listening Tour Themes and Institutional Change –** President Smith reported that the listening tour reflected pride in the university's progress, innovation, accountability, and growing national relevance, while also identifying strain on current people, processes, technology, and institutional approaches. He emphasized that future progress will require continued change.
7. **Regional Public University Context –** President Smith referenced Northern Arizona University's similar planning work and noted shared challenges for regional public universities, including unavoidable enrollment decline, aging institutional operating models, and the

promise and risks of AI. He connected this work to Marshall's effort to reclaim its purpose and prepare for the future.

ix. **Closing Remarks –** President Smith expressed confidence in Marshall's direction and reiterated that the university is positioned to advance into the next phase of transformation and become a national best-practice model. He offered to answer questions regarding the general report and, with the Chair's and body's permission, to invite Chief Information Officer Jody Penrod to address IT and network questions.

Questions for President Smith:

Event Technology Concern – Marybeth Beller, College of Liberal Arts, reported concerns regarding technology support during a Women's Equality Day event held on August 19. She noted that two university offices had coordinated the event, that a pre-event walkthrough had occurred, and that microphones did not function properly during the event despite panelists traveling from around the state. She emphasized that the university must do better in supporting campus events.
President's Response – President Smith apologized to Ms. Beller and to the invited guests, acknowledged that the experience was below the university's standards and expectations, and stated that the university is committed to improvement. He noted that the Huron work may help identify duplication or resources that can be redirected to priority areas, including technology support.
CIO Participation – With no objections from the body, the remaining time was turned over to Chief Information Officer Jodie Penrod to address technology-related questions and concerns.
IT Staffing and Support Structure – She clarified that Marshall University Information Technology employs more than 70 professionals to support university campuses. She reported that IT service desk and classroom technology staff work on campus five days per week during normal business hours, provide extended support through the IT service desk, and that the School of Medicine and Physician Assistant programs have five dedicated IT staff members for their academic units.
Network Service Interruptions –Addressed recent network outages, explaining that the return of more than 13,000 students, faculty, and staff to campus exposed a network configuration issue during authentication. She reported that the issue had been rolled back and that IT continues to monitor network performance, work with vendors, apply cybersecurity patches, and make adjustments to reduce future disruptions.
Reporting Technology Issues – Encouraged faculty and staff to submit service desk tickets for network, wireless, classroom, or device-related issues so that IT can identify and resolve problems.
Use of AI in Technology Support – Clarified that AI is one of several support options and

is not intended to replace in-person or live support. Technology support remains available through phone calls, the IT service desk, in-person assistance at Drinko Library, MyMU ticket submissions, MySupport, the Marsha AI assistant, and live chat with support staff. She emphasized that users may request a live agent at the beginning of an AI chat when staffing is available.

Blackboard Concerns – Philippe Georgel, College of Science, raised concerns about Blackboard updates occurring near the beginning of the semester and suggested that faculty with 12-month appointments could help test Blackboard earlier to identify issues before the start-of-semester bottleneck. Chief Information Officer Jodie Penrod explained that Blackboard is a software-as-a-service platform and that the university does not control when upgrades occur. She stated that MUIT and Marshall Online are discussing ways to make Blackboard course shells available earlier so faculty can begin working through issues sooner.

Classroom Technology Staffing – Marybeth Beller, College of Liberal Arts, asked whether only two employees are available to assist with classroom technology and real-time teaching support. Chief Information Officer Jodie Penrod clarified that two staff members are assigned specifically to classroom technology break-fix support, but additional IT service desk staff are available to assist. She noted that IT is working to better align support services.

Technology Hardware Lifecycle – Jim Denvir, School of Medicine, asked whether IT has sufficient resources to maintain and replace hardware, including network infrastructure and faculty computers. Chief Information Officer Jodie Penrod reported that the university has worked with CFO Matt Tidd and President Smith to establish lifecycle replacement funding for firewalls, network switches, wireless access equipment, and computing devices. She noted that wireless replacement is supported in part through a redirected Wi-Fi fee and that computing devices are expected to return to an approximate five- to seven-year replacement cycle.

b. Provost – Diane Helfers Petrella (15 minutes)

   i. **Opening Remarks and Appreciation –** Provost Petrella attended virtually from the Greenbrier during the West Virginia Business Summit and noted that this was her first Faculty Senate meeting as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. She expressed appreciation for the Faculty Senate and affirmed the importance of shared governance at Marshall University.
   ii. **Commitment to Shared Governance –** The Provost emphasized her commitment to meaningful shared governance and stated that strong universities are built from strong faculty voices. She expressed interest

in learning from Marshall faculty, working collaboratively, and engaging in thoughtful dialogue as the university shapes its future.

iii. **Initial Impressions of Marshall –** The Provost reported that during her first several weeks on campus, she had focused on listening and learning. She noted the university's positive culture, belief in its mission, institutional momentum, impactful academic programs, growing research enterprise, and investments in innovation and economic development.

iv. **Higher Education Landscape –** The Provost identified significant challenges facing higher education, including demographic shifts, changing student expectations, increased scrutiny regarding value and outcomes, rising competition, technological disruption related to artificial intelligence, affordability pressures, and concerns about public trust.

v. **Priorities for the Academic Year –**
1**. Student Success** should remain at the center of the university's work. The Provost emphasized the need to examine policies, practices, and support systems that help students thrive, graduate, and begin their careers while maintaining the standards of a Marshall degree.
2. **Enrollment and Retention** were identified as critical priorities in light of declining numbers of high school graduates. The Provost reported that the first-year class included more than 1,900 students, including nearly 1,500 from West Virginia; however, West Virginia enrollment decreased by approximately 1%. Undergraduate enrollment was up about 0.5% without dual credit, graduate enrollment was down about 2.4%, and overall enrollment was down about 0.3%, or approximately 32 students. The Student Success Action Learning Team recently submitted recommendations after several months of studying best practices in student success. The Provost thanked the approximately 15-member team and stated that advancing the recommendations will require collaboration and openness to change.
2. **Teaching and Scholarly Achievement** should continue to be supported through a culture that values outstanding teaching, research, creative work, community-engaged scholarship, and transformational educational experiences.
3. **Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies** should be addressed thoughtfully. The Provost noted that AI presents opportunities for learning, discovery, and productivity, while also raising questions related to academic integrity, assessment, student learning, and intellectual property.

vi. **Upcoming Institutional Work –** The Provost noted several major efforts ahead, including restructuring student support systems, implementing recommendations from Huron's external review, and navigating a review of the academic portfolio.

vii. **Closing Remarks –** The Provost stated that her goal is to work with faculty to make decisions that ensure Marshall's future, support financial stability, and advance the institution's mission. She emphasized building relationships grounded in trust, mutual respect, and shared commitment to Marshall's vision. Universities are places of possibility, and faculty play an important role in helping students discover talents, consider new career pathways, and become contributing citizens in their communities. She stated that it is a privilege to support this work and expressed enthusiasm for Marshall University's future. The Provost affirmed her intent to partner with the Faculty Senate to advance academic work, support students, expand Marshall's impact, and help the university continue to thrive in a complex and evolving higher education landscape.

Questions for Provost Petrella: None

c. Board of Governors – Robin Riner (5 minutes)

i. Chair Gage addressed that Dr. Riner was not able to make it to the meeting and she sent a message stating that she has nothing new to report and said that if anybody has questions, you can refer to the last e-mail that was sent out from the Board of Governors report or address her directly with questions.

d. Advisory Council of Faculty – Amine Oudghiri-Otmani (5 minutes)

i. The Advisory Council of Faculty (ACF) held two Zoom meetings since the Apr. 23 Faculty Senate meeting: one on Friday, Apr. 24, one day following our last Faculty Senate meeting, and one on Friday, July 10. The following are important highlights from the Apr. 24 meeting:

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. We started by approving minutes from the Jan. 23 meeting.
2. We then entertained a few legislative updates as the legislative session had already wrapped up. Among others, we discussed HB 4587, Prohibiting public funds from supporting low-earning outcome postsecondary degree programs, a bill that was closest to moving. We also discussed the 3% increase to state employees, and SB 551, Restoring voting rights to students, which made it to the agenda but was stricken.

3. We concluded the April meeting with a few workgroup updates, mainly internationalization and online learning standards, followed by a discussion of adjunct, summer, and overload pay from the respective institutions, in addition to GTS, Great Teachers Seminar.

At the July 10 meeting, which was a short meeting.

1. We discussed updates regarding the ACF retreat to be held on October 16-17 at the Bridgeport Conference Center in Bridgeport, WV.
2. There was also a brief discussion about ambiguity regarding officer term lengths. There was a motion to formalize officer terms for two years. After the motion was seconded, all present voted in favor.
3. Meeting adjourned at 1:15. Our next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 16, which will be the first day of the ACF retreat.

e. Graduate Council – Richard Egleton (5 minutes)

i. Initial Meeting – Graduate Council held its first meeting on Friday, October 28. The meeting focused primarily on reviewing Graduate Council rules and bylaws. Graduate Council Officers and Committee Chairs – The Council confirmed Amanda Meadows as Vice Chair and Stephen Young as Secretary. Sandra Strobel agreed to continue as Chair of Planning, Huanshu Yuan was identified as Chair of Credentialing, and Amanda Meadows was identified as Chair of Program Review. The Chair of the Curriculum Committee remains under discussion and is expected to be confirmed before the next Graduate Council meeting.

ii. Proposed Policy Timeline for New Programs and Majors – The Council discussed a proposed Graduate Council policy change requiring any new program or major proposal to come before Graduate Council at the March meeting rather than the April meeting. This change would allow time for discussion, possible tabling, and follow-up responses from the proposing program before the end of the semester.

iii. Proposal Management Considerations – The Council noted that, under the current management software process, proposals not completed by the end of the semester are deleted and must be restarted. The proposed March deadline is intended to provide a fairer process and prevent programs from having to restart proposals unnecessarily.

iv. Graduate Council Retreat Planning – The Council discussed planning for a Graduate Council retreat to address policy items and other areas of interest, including artificial intelligence as it relates to Graduate Council work.

f. Student Government Association – Alissa Davis (5 minutes)

   i. No report, encouraged faculty to reach out for student volunteers and encouraged input on Student Government activities.

7. Adjournment - approved

The meeting was adjourned at 5: 08 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

/s/ Melinda Varney

Melinda Varney, Recording Secretary, Faculty Senate

MINUTES APPROVED BY FACULTY SENATE:

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Dr. Rick Gage, Chair — Date Signed
Faculty Senate

MINUTES READ:

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Brad Smith, President — Date Signed
Marshall University