

MEMORANDUM

TO: Hailey Bibbee, Administrative Associate  
FROM: Marybeth Beller, Faculty Senate Liaison to Government Affairs Committee  
DATE: November 20, 2025  
RE: Committee Report

The Government Affairs Committee met October 5<sup>th</sup> and set meeting dates for the year. We will meet on the first Thursday of each month at 2:00. All meetings will be held in TEAMS. Marybeth Beller chairs the committee, and Alysha Nichols is the recording secretary.

MU Day at the Legislature is scheduled for February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Sara Payne Scarbro reported that the administration is hoping to have heavy representation from the Marshall community. The committee requested that talking points be given to everyone attending the event well in advance so that we can all be educated on the issues and therefore better equipped to speak with legislators if the opportunity arises.

The PEIA Finance Board has proposed a 3% premium increase for employees, employers, and Medicare and non-Medicare retirees for fiscal year 2027, which begins in July. Additional proposals include a variable spousal surcharge, which averages \$200 per family and an increase of \$2.50 administrative fee for employers. Non-state employers will be required to have a minimum of 50% of their employees enrolled in the PEIA program.

The PEIA Finance Board held public hearings on these proposals in Wheeling, Beckley, Martinsburg, and Charleston during the fall. It is expected to vote on the proposals at its December 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Charlotte Weber presented information that one item we need to continue to monitor is legislation, nationally and in the state, that could curtail research with China. Science Insider reported at the beginning of this month that Congress is considering passage of the SAFE Act, which stands for Securing American Funding and Expertise from Adversarial Research Exploitation. The legislation will deny federal funding to scientists who collaborate in any way with China, Russia, Iran, or North Korea. Concerned faculty may read the article here: <https://www.science.org/content/article/u-s-congress-consider-sweeping-ban-chinese-collaborations>

Last year Delegate Holstein introduced the American Campus Act, which will prohibit students or researchers sponsored from these four countries from attending or working at West Virginia institutions of higher education. The bill was never taken up by committee, but Charlotte Weber reported that we are likely to see it introduced again in session.

The West Virginia Legislature will have its December Interim Meeting on December 7-9 in Charleston. The regular session begins January 12, 2026.