

## Marshall University Classified Staff Council Minutes

December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Shawkey Dining Room & via Microsoft Teams

**Members Present:** Jesse Baldwin, Nina Barrett, Lacie Bittinger, Mark Brumfield, David Childers, Dean Crawford, Tiffani Daniels, Mary Layne, Becky Lusher, Nick Martin, Nathan Miller, Larry Morris, Carleen O'Neill, Heather Smith, Nancy Tresch-Reneau,

**Members Absent:**

**Members Absent (Excused):**

**Guests:** Attached

Chair Lacie Bittinger called the meeting to order.

### John Marshall Service Awards

- Bruce announced that each of the following employees was awarded the John Marshall Service Award for various outstanding services to the University:
  - **Tara Hensley**
  - **Carissa McDonald**
  - **Clay Arens**
- If you know of an employee who goes above and beyond in their job, please let us know by submitting a nomination for them here: <https://www.marshall.edu/human-resources/john-marshall-service-award/>. (Please be sure to be very detailed in your submission).

### President Brad Smith

- **Winter Commencement Recap**
  - **Commencement outcomes:**
    1. 1,112 graduates walked across the stage.
    2. 59% first-generation college graduates.
    3. Age range: 17 to 74, highlighting lifelong learning.
- **Enrollment Performance & Forward Outlook**
  - **Current Performance (Fall 2025)**
    1. National trend: 4-year colleges up 1.9%.
    2. West Virginia: 4-year institutions up 1.7%.
    3. Marshall University: up 7.8% — ~4× faster than state and national growth.
    4. Cumulative growth: Since the start of “Marshall for All, Marshall Forever,” ~20.5–21% enrollment growth.
    5. State backdrop: WV overall roughly down ~0.1% over the period referenced.
  - **Enrollment Cliff**
    1. Originating from 2008–2009 lower birth rates; cliff begins next fall and extends through 2041.
    2. National impact: ~15% fewer 18-year-olds by 2041.
    3. West Virginia impact: ~26% fewer 18-year-olds by 2041 (one of five hardest-hit states), due to older demographics and fewer births.

- **Current & Planned Strategies**
  1. Diversification of market: Adult learners, military veterans, and metro region prospects.
  2. Execution to date: ~350 recruiting events conducted this fall.
  3. Policy/program plans:
    - Exploring Metro program expansion to border states by Fall 2027.
    - Rebalancing financial aid to allocate more needs-based support, alongside merit.
- **Legislative Priorities (State & Federal)**
  - **Engagement to Date**
    1. Met with legislative leaders during interims.
    2. Hosted leaders at Brad's home.
    3. Goal: Pre-brief priorities ahead of the legislative session and align requests with state needs.
  - **Foundational Priorities**
    1. Employee pay increases
    2. PEIA relief or improved solution
    3. Asking legislature and governor to honor the performance-based funding formula that was written with them and the 4-year institution presidents.
    4. Deferred maintenance for aging campus assets
      - Marshall has ~\$300M in buildings, which are only getting older
      - Prior state support: \$21.8M ("shock and awe"), enabling:
        - Holderby and Laidley demolitions,
        - New signage, HVAC replacements, carpeting, etc.
      - Ongoing need to maintain momentum and address backlog.
  - **Strategic Priorities** (if any incremental funding available at the State level)
    1. **College of Science Renovation**
      - Building constructed 1948; last major renovation ~40 years ago.
      - Facility issues: outdated hooding systems, HVAC, lab fume management; summer lab temps up to 115°F (safety & accreditation concerns).
      - Asking legislature to help with first \$20M to begin modernization (focus on 3rd & 4th floors), aligned to campus master plan.
    2. **School of Medicine – New Building**
      - 50th anniversary in 2027; accreditation review also 2027.
      - Marshall is the only medical school out of 176 nationally without its own dedicated building (current operations dispersed between Cabell Huntington Hospital admin wing plus five other locations).
      - Plan: Federal funding + state match + philanthropy to build a new School of Medicine on Hal Greer (corner lot near School of Pharmacy).
      - State coordination: WVU also seeking to expand their medical school, so we're proposing one health care umbrella for workforce needs and to gain more doctors in WV.
    3. **Cam Henderson Center (CAM) – HVAC Upgrade**

- The current HVAC system doesn't work well and causes the building to become very hot in the summer, making conditions unsafe for practices, summer camps, etc.
  - Revenue opportunity: a functional system would enable event rentals (e.g., concerts like Zach Bryan), generating income to reinvest.
- **Q:** Is there some way we can financially help students who struggled early in their college career, lost their financial aid, turned their grades around, are on track to graduate, and have no financial aid left to get there?
  - **A:** Brad stated that this is a good idea that they will discuss with the cabinet.
- **Q:** Is there a way to financially help students who are unable to complete their degree in four years and need an extra summer session to make it to graduation?
  - **A:** Brad stated that they are looking into that with the Marshall For All program.

### **Interim Provost Dr. Bookwalter – Academic Affairs**

- **Accreditation Update**
  - **Context:**
    - Marshall University has been preparing for a Higher Learning Commission (HLC) reaccreditation, a process ongoing for 2.5–3 years.
    - Site visit scheduled: January 26–27.
    - HLC team will review documents, visit campus, and hold listening sessions with faculty, staff, and multiple constituencies.
  - **Focus Areas for Staff:**
    - Understand and articulate Marshall's mission and your role in fulfilling it.
    - Mission elements:
      - Offer a range of high-quality, affordable, accessible programs (undergraduate, graduate, professional).
      - Offer opportunities and experiences to foster understanding and appreciation of the rich diversity of thought and culture.
      - Maintain dynamic intellectual, artistic, and cultural life; promote and support research and creative activities.
      - Contribute to community quality of life (economic development, healthcare, cultural enrichment).
      - Cultivate an inclusive, just, and equitable community.
    - HLC Criteria:
      - Mission – Serving the public good.
      - Integrity – Transparency, honesty, adherence to policies.
      - Teaching & Learning for Student Success – Program quality, assessment processes, faculty/staff effectiveness.
      - Sustainability – Administrative effectiveness, governance, resources, planning for continuous improvement.
  - **Websites**
    - Review your office website for accuracy and updates.
    - Ensure **job titles, staff listings, and content** are current.

- **Budget Planning**
  - **Current Status:**
    - Preparing **FY2027 budget**.
    - Units asked to explore **2% expenditure reductions** to address deficit.
    - Goal: Operate **leaner and more efficiently** while maintaining quality.
- **Enrollment Growth**
  - **Positive Trends:**
    - Three consecutive years of enrollment growth.
    - Budget model assumed 1% annual growth, but actual growth has been 4.5–5% per year.
  - **Fall 2026 Funnel (as of mid-December):**
    - Applications received: 15% ahead of last year.
    - Completed applications: 43% ahead of last year.
    - Intent to enroll: 14% ahead of last year.

## **Matt Tidd – CFO**

- **Financial Performance Through November**
  - **Tuition & Fees:**
    - Gross tuition and fees up 3.3% (~\$3M) compared to same period last year.
    - Reflects strong enrollment performance.
  - **Utilities:**
    - Expenses lower by ~\$600K year-over-year
  - **Pell Grant Revenue:**
    - Increased from \$17M (2023) to ~\$23M in recent years.
    - Direct cash flow deposited into university accounts; supports tuition and payroll.
    - Spring Pell disbursement expected in 2–3 weeks.
  - **Cash Flow Monitoring**
    - Current cash balance: \$13M (up from \$6M two weeks ago).
    - Mid-January peak expected: \$30–\$32M (Pell, scholarships, federal grants).
    - Cash tightness returns April–August when student payments stop; continued monitoring required.
  - **Benefit costs:** Up \$2M year-over-year (PEIA increases).
- **Budget Timeline & Governance**
  - Templates released: Units preparing submissions now; due end of January.
  - Review process:
    - Budget Advisory Committee (16 members) reviews all submissions against actuals and benchmarks.
    - Executive Budget Committee (CFO, President, Provost) meets Feb–Apr.
    - Board approval: FY27 budget and tuition/fees in April.
- **Current Fiscal Year Outlook**
  - **FY26 budget had a \$12.5M deficit.**
  - **Current estimate:** ~\$10M after increases from tuition and fee numbers.
  - **FY27 target:** ~\$3M deficit with aggressive cost control.
  - **Goal:** Break-even or slight deficit by end of FY27

- **Q:** How realistic is it for us to operate in the black, and do any of our peer institutions operate in the black?
  - **A:** Very realistic, with a lot of work from the campus.
- **Q:** Once we are operating in the black, is there a plan to pay back the \$45 million we took from our savings?
  - Yes, although it will probably be in small chunks.
- **Q:** Sometimes a student's summer class is cancelled due to not having enough students. When this happens, they get a refund and often spend their money at another institution. Would it be better for us financially to keep the student and have the summer class?
  - **A:** Not necessarily. When we don't have a certain number of students in a class, we can't pay the professor what their normal rate is.
- **Q:** Regarding budget planning and proposed cuts, what if a program has no further room to make cuts?
  - **A:** Departments are encouraged to go through the exercise of showing what would be cut, but the VPs of each group will be able to explain how it affects them.

### **Bruce Felder – Human Resources**

- **Market Analysis & Compensation Adjustments**
  - Three years ago, the university began a market analysis initiative to bring all employees into a competitive market range.
  - The institution is currently \$550,000 away from achieving full alignment with the entry point of the competitive market range.
  - The target date for completing this commitment is July 2026.
- **Employee Engagement & Evaluations**
  - Leadership renewed focus on employee engagement through improved management practices and consistent evaluations.
  - Evaluations had not stopped previously but required renewed attention and structure.
  - The first cycle of the updated evaluation process is underway and will end in July 2026.
  - Employees are encouraged to check in regularly with supervisors; monthly meetings are expected.
- **Total Rewards Statements**
  - The university continues its initiative to provide Total Rewards Statements.
  - A new batch was released in November 2025.
  - Employees are encouraged to review their full compensation package, including salary, benefits, time off, and other components.
- **Cell Phone & Data Stipend Integration**
  - Cell phone and data stipends were officially rolled into base salaries this year.
  - This change reduces administrative burden and simplifies compensation management.
- **Annual Engagement Survey**
  - The third annual engagement survey was completed.
  - The survey serves as a "virtual listening tour," providing leadership with candid employee feedback.
  - A more in-depth, in-person engagement effort is planned for 2026.

- **Address Updates for W-2 Forms**
  - Employees who moved during the year must update their address to ensure W-2 forms are delivered correctly.
  - Former employees may also update their address if needed.
- **Winter Break Schedule**
  - Last workday before winter break: Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>.
  - Planned return date: Friday, January 2 (pending potential statewide announcements).
  - Leadership will communicate any changes promptly and coordinate with the “five families” if adjustments are required.
- **Compensation Training**
  - Compensation 102 training for supervisors is open for registration.
  - Supervisors who completed Compensation 101 are encouraged to continue with the deeper-dive training.
- **Real-Time Budget Monitoring**
  - Thanks to HR and institutional research teams, the university can now track personnel budget vs. actual spending in real time.
  - Current status:
    - 94.1% of the personnel operating budget is in use.
    - 1,905 employees are currently on payroll.
  - This new capability allows more precise financial management and supports the “save to serve” initiative.
- **Employee Compensation Training**
  - General employee training on the new pay-for-performance system will begin March–April 2026.
  - Training will explain the system from the employee perspective.
- **Performance Management Training**
  - Additional training for supervisors will begin February 2026.
  - Training expands on earlier consultant-led sessions and aims to strengthen supervisory skills.
- **Market Study Refresh**
  - After all employees reach the competitive market range in July 2026, the university will refresh the market study.
  - Adjustments may follow based on updated data.
- **Recruitment Performance**
  - Recruitment is strong across all job categories.
  - Average time-to-fill for classified, non-classified, and faculty positions is under 40 days, considered best practice.
- **Retention Metrics**
  - Faculty retention: ~91%
  - Non-classified staff retention: 90–92%
  - Classified staff retention: 84–85%, which is below the desired threshold.
  - Peer institutions report similar challenges, with some classified retention rates as low as 75–76%.
- **Campus Police Retention Challenges**
  - The university trains and certifies officers, increasing their marketability.

- Competing agencies recruit certified officers with higher pay or better facilities.
- Leadership acknowledges the challenge and is analyzing:
  - Stay surveys
  - Exit interviews
  - Engagement survey data
- Proposed Solutions & Discussion
  - Operation Course Strength: Encourages departments to evaluate optimal staffing levels.
  - Example: If a team can operate effectively with 12 instead of 15 employees, savings could be redirected to increase pay for remaining staff.
- **Q:** What is the timeline on the spousal tuition benefit?
  - **A:** If it passes, hopefully it can be in place by fall 2026. It will mirror the dependent waiver that already exists.

## **Eric Himes – Information Technology**

- **Micro-Credentials Platform Migration**
  - The Online Education team and IT recently migrated micro-credentials from Genius to Salesforce.
  - Salesforce now serves as the unified platform for managing micro-credentials.
  - All micro-credentials are accessible under the “Monitor Any” tab in Salesforce.
  - Employees can browse and sign up for new micro-credentials directly within the system.
- **Device OS & Driver Update Policy**
  - A new update policy begins January.
  - Updates (OS and drivers) will be pushed to campus devices every Tuesday, rolled out in phases.
  - Users may delay updates for up to 10 days, but cannot postpone beyond that limit.
  - Regular updates will be mandatory to maintain security and system stability.
  - Additional communication and educational resources will be provided to help users understand the process.
- **Adobe Sign Overage Recommendation**
  - A recommendation has been submitted to the Budget Advisory Committee regarding Adobe Sign usage.
  - The university pays for a fixed number of Adobe Sign transactions.
  - Departments or colleges exceeding 500 transactions will be responsible for additional costs.
    - Overage cost: \$2.06 per transaction.
    - Example:
      - If a department uses 200 transactions, the remaining 300 roll into the shared pool.
      - After the institution surpasses 5,000 total transactions, all additional usage incurs overage charges.
  - Clarification was provided that Adobe Sign is different from Dynamic Forms.

- Documentation is being developed to help users determine which platform best fits their workflow.
- Adobe Sign is preferred when a true electronic signature is required.
- **RFP for New Video Management Platform**
  - An RFP is being released for a new video management platform.
    - The main campus and the medical school use two different platforms.
    - Goal: Consolidate into a single platform to improve support, service quality, and reduce costs.
  - Faculty and staff feedback is highly encouraged throughout the RFP process.
  - Vendor presentations will be open to the campus community.
- **Equipment Lending Policy (ITP)**
  - A new ITP Equipment Lending Policy has been released for review.
  - Attendees were encouraged to read and provide feedback.
- **Banner System Upgrade**
  - A scheduled Banner upgrade will occur:
    - Saturday, 8:00 AM through Sunday, 5:00 PM.
  - Users should expect downtime during this maintenance window.

## **Callie Isenberg – First Ascent**

- **Background & Problem**
  - West Virginia faces **population loss** and **brain drain**, with **61% of graduates leaving the state after graduation**.
  - A \$25 million grant funded initiatives to address these issues.
  - The **Brad and Elise Smith Outdoor Economic Development Collaborative (OEDC)** was created to tackle population loss and foster vibrant communities.
- **Program Overview**
  - **First Ascent** is a **two-year program** designed to retain graduates in West Virginia.
  - Initially focused on remote/hybrid employment but now supports **in-person roles** as well.
  - Works alongside **Ascend WV**, which attracts remote workers to the state.
- **Locations**
  - Participants must live in one of **seven communities**:
    - Morgantown
    - Greenbrier Valley
    - Eastern Panhandle
    - Greater Elkins
    - New River Gorge
    - Charleston
    - Huntington
- **Program Benefits**
  - **Career Support:**
    - Professional and career coaching
    - Job placement assistance (in-state and remote)
    - Access to entrepreneurship ecosystem (grants, mentors, funding)
    - Mentorship program across diverse fields



- Microcredentialing and durable skills courses via WVU and Marshall
- Free co-working spaces (most locations; Huntington pending)
- **Lifestyle & Recreation:**
  - Curated outdoor activities (rafting, hiking, biking, zip-lining)
  - Gear library (kayaks, bikes, camping equipment)
  - Social events (paint nights, happy hours, dinners)
  - Purpose-driven volunteer opportunities (Habitat for Humanity, trail cleanups)
- **Eligibility**
  - Graduating students (preferably final semester)
  - Must secure a job or be willing to work toward one (program assists)
  - Must choose one of the seven designated communities
- **Impact & Metrics**
  - **Current members:** 59
  - **Alumni:** 2 (completed two years)
  - Recent additions: 16 new members (14 from Marshall)
  - Over 127 microcredentialing courses completed (includes non-members)
- Contact: Callie Isenberg, First Ascent, [callie.isenberg@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:callie.isenberg@mail.wvu.edu)

## **Carleen O'Neill – Board of Governors**

The following report has been supplied by Carleen O'Neill.

### **BOG December 3, 2025 Meeting**

Condensed by Carleen O'Neill BOG Classified Staff Council Rep.

Official BOG minutes are listed: [Board Meeting Minutes - Marshall University Board of Governors](#)

The Board of Governors meeting on December 3, 2025, covered updates from multiple committees and university leadership.

**The Athletics Committee** reported a 92% graduate success rate, leading the Sun Belt Conference, and announced that all student-athletes will complete 15 hours of community service. NCAA legislation changes regarding jersey logos and sponsorships will be discussed at the upcoming convention. Title IX assessments highlighted the need for improved academic advising and upgraded space in the CAM, with Big Green assisting in infrastructure improvements. Efforts to boost game attendance among the 35–54 age demographic include addressing food pricing, entertainment, and ticketing strategies. Budget progress stands at 55/45 institutional versus athletics support, with plans to revise tuition waivers and retain Big Green donors. Two athletics positions: CFO and Compliance remain open.

**The Academic Committee** approved AA-5: *removing the residency requirement for dependent tuition and SA-1: student rights and responsibilities updates*. Reports emphasized priorities such as student success, economic development, and board autonomy, while noting concerns about faculty workload, salaries, and PEIA.

**The School of Medicine** achieved full accreditation with no citations, improved exam performance, and increased applications by 30%, though attrition remains at 20% after two years. New programs include a medical sciences certificate and dual MD degrees in Communication Studies and Health Informatics.

**Graduate Studies** aims to expand PhD and online programs. Currently, has 10 concentrations. Graduate

students are 24.8% enrollment.

**Honors College** reported a 93% first-to-second-year retention rate, and a graduation rate nearly double the university average.

**Student Affairs** will have a name change to Division of Student Affairs, BOLD leadership Women Program, is leadership development for women. ACE Center (East Hall) action/connection/and engagement.

**The full board meeting** introduced new members: Vicki Dunn Dionne and Charles Wendell and approved prior minutes. Updates on the Innovation District outlined plans to connect campus with downtown Huntington, featuring projects like the Brad D. Smith Business School, an innovation hub, and an Institute for Cybersecurity opening in 2027. Aviation programs now serve 312 students across nine WV locations, and fundraising continues for a new medical school building.

**The Finance Committee** approved the FY2025 audit and a significant housing rate increase for The Landing. CFO Matt Tidd reported a \$2M improvement on the deficit, projecting break-even by 2028. Facilities updates include deferred maintenance projects, new lighting, and a mural funded by an NEA grant.

Athletics achievements include seven teams with perfect graduation rates and a Sun Belt postgraduate scholarship winner. Concessions and fan engagement strategies are being refined, including a decibel study for stadium sound.

**SGA** reported food drive- and pop-up pantries were successful assisting students in wake of federal cuts and shut downs. They raised \$11,000.00 to help fund student organizations this semester. Dancing with the Herd is sold out but donations to support each couple can still be made.

**The President's report** noted a 74% employee survey completion rate, with engagement slightly down but overall better than peers in leadership and communication. Enrollment rose 7.7%, though a demographic cliff is expected next fall. Early applications for Fall 2026 are up 11%, and retention improved by 4%.

The meeting concluded with winter commencement plans and the next meeting scheduled for February 5, 2026. The fund raiser, Dancing with the Herd Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at Foundations Hall and will have live stream available.

## **Minutes**

- The November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 minutes were approved as written.

## **Classified Staff Council Committees**

- **Elections/Communications Committee – Nina Barrett** – No Report.
- **Legislative Committee – Larry Morris**
  - The committee hosted Senator Fuller for an information session prior to the meeting.
- **Personnel/Finance Committee – Becky Lusher** – No report.
- **Physical Environment Committee – Becky Lusher** – No report.
- **Staff Development/Service Committee – Tiffani Daniels**
  - The committee collected hats, gloves, and a few coats.

- The Thanksgiving Dinner for students was a success.

## **Announcements**

Minutes taken and prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Katie M. Counts, Program Assistant, Classified Staff Council

Minutes approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lacie Bittinger, Chair, Classified Staff Council

Minutes read by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brad D. Smith, University President