

Marshall University Classified Staff Council Minutes February 19th, 2026 Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Jesse Baldwin, Nina Barrett, Lacie Bittinger, Kathy Brannock, David Childers, Dean Crawford, Tiffani Daniels, Mary Layne, Becky Lusher, Nick Martin, Nathan Miller, Larry Morris, Carleen O’Neill, Elizabeth Rexroad, Marcos Serrat, Heather Smith, Nancy Tresch-Reneau,

Members Absent: Mark Brumfield, Kimberly Crigler, Amy Weaver

Members Absent (Excused):

Guests: Attached

Chair Lacie Bittinger called the meeting to order.

John Marshall Service Awards

- Bruce announced that the following employee was awarded the John Marshall Service Award for various outstanding services to the University:
 - **Denise Parks**
- 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

- **Federal Legislative Update**
 - 2026 federal budget passed despite partial government shutdown.
 - Wins for Higher Education:
 - TRIO maintained
 - Campus childcare
 - Pell Grants
 - Minority-serving & international student institution support (Fulbright)
 - Research & Indirect Cost Recovery
 - Concerns about capping indirect cost recovery were resolved; funding levels were maintained.

Marshall University Federal Appropriations (~\$30 million total)

Strategic Pillar	Funding	Purpose
Healthcare	\$15M	New medical school construction
	\$1.9M	Health informatics technology
	\$1M	Natural products research center
Cybersecurity	\$1.5M	Cybersecurity initiatives

Strategic Pillar	Funding	Purpose
Forensic Science	\$2.5M	Program expansion
Engineering Research and Development	\$5M	Safety and infrastructure research
Aviation	\$3.1M	Scaling aircraft and student capacity

- **State Legislative Update**

- 2,469 bills introduced; 53 relate to higher education.
- Marshall Day (Feb 3): 250 attendees; well received.
- Budget presentation to House Finance Committee (Feb 4): No follow-up questions; praised for clarity.
- House Finance Committee approved a \$30M match for the School of Medicine (pending Senate and Governor approval).
- Bills being tracked include those involving:
 - PEIA
 - Tuition policy
 - WV Invest
 - Campus safety
 - Accreditation
 - Military/law enforcement tuition exemptions
 - AI use
 - Mental health
 - Outcomes-based funding formulas

- **Fitch Credit Rating Update**

- Outcome
 - Credit rating affirmed
 - Outlook lowered from stable to negative.
- Reasons for Affirmation
 - Multi-year enrollment growth
 - Increased first time freshman numbers
 - Strong state and federal support
 - Alumni giving
- Reason for Negative Outlook
 - One remaining year to eliminate structural deficit.
 - Cash reserves temporarily reduced during final year of deficit correction.
- President Smith emphasized this is expected “point in time pressure” and that by 2027 Fitch anticipates revising the outlook positively if trends continue.

- **Discontinuation of Women’s Swim and Dive & Addition of Stunt**

- This wasn’t a quick decision, but rather a culmination of months of research and discussion. The decision followed extensive analysis of:
 - Competitive positioning
 - Conference alignment

- Participation trends
- Facility requirements
- Title IX compliance
- Reasons for the decision:
 - Title IX Proportionality
 - Undergraduate population: 57% women / 43% men.
 - Swim & Dive offered ~30 women's opportunities; Stunt offers ~65.
 - Title IX compliance requires:
 - Proportionality – same ratio of men to women as the ratio of student population.
 - A 5 year plan to add a sport if out of proportionality.
 - A student interest survey – to find out what sports aren't offered but would be of interest.
 - Stunt emerged as a sport with strong regional interest (KY, OH, PA).
 - Financial Considerations
 - Swim & Dive annual cost: \$819,000
 - Stunt annual cost: \$330,000
 - Savings: ~\$500,000 per year
 - Estimated \$2M savings over 3 years while increasing participation.
 - Infrastructure Limitations
 - Natatorium built in 1981; last major renovation in 2002.
 - Title IX review cited inadequate Division I competitive facilities.
 - Required upgrades: \$500K–\$1M (sport specific).
 - University cannot fund necessary improvements.
 - President Smith clarified the pool will remain available for public, high school, and academic use.
- **Q:** Will the swim team still get to participate in club sports?
 - **A:** Yes. Additionally, they were told that as long as they stay at Marshall they will retain their scholarships and access to everything they have as a student athlete.

Interim Provost Dr. Bookwalter – Academic Affairs

- **Spring Enrollment**
 - Spring enrollment reached 12,205 students, the highest since 2019.
- **Retention Improvements**
 - Fewer students are stopping out between fall and spring.
 - Improvement attributed to strong advising and student services.
- **Graduation Metrics**
 - Time to graduation improved:
 - Two years ago: 4.27 years
 - This year: 4.15 years
 - Four-year graduation rate increased from 32% to 34%.

- **Fall 2026 Enrollment**
 - Fall 2026 projections indicate over 2,000 incoming freshmen, a threshold reached only once in the past decade.
 - This marks the fourth consecutive year of projected growth.
 - Due to prior years of enrollment decline, the outgoing senior class is smaller, but all four undergraduate cohorts are now growing.
- **Budget**
 - All academic, revenue, and support units have submitted budgets and impact statements.
 - The university continues to progress toward eliminating the structural deficit.
- **Faculty & Staffing Ratios**
 - Student to faculty ratio:
 - Marshall: 15:1
 - SREB peers: 16.8:1
 - Marshall remains 12% below peer ratios, indicating room for efficiency improvements.
 - Full-time faculty numbers have decreased by 19 over the past two years (excluding the medical school).
- **Instructional Cost Considerations**
 - Revenue per student exceeds peers, but cost of instruction is also higher.
 - Reason: Marshall uses more full-time faculty and fewer adjuncts.
 - Deans and chairs are being asked to:
 - Review course rotations
 - Address low enrollment courses
 - Improve scheduling efficiency
- **Mercer Engagement Survey** - The Cabinet is reviewing survey results and seeking campuswide input on three areas:
 - Accountability
 - Slight dip in accountability scores.
 - Units are being asked:
 - Where is accountability lacking?
 - What examples illustrate this?
 - What improvements would increase clarity?
 - Tools & Resources
 - With tighter budgets, some essential resources may be strained.
 - Feedback requested on what tools or supports are missing.
 - Market Responsiveness
 - What is missing to ensure programs meet changing market needs?
 - Despite budget constraints, program quality and relevance remain priorities.
- **Digital Accessibility Initiative**
 - University-wide effort to ensure all digital materials meet accessibility standards.
 - Deadline: April 24.
 - PDFs remain the most challenging format to remediate.
 - Strong support provided by IT and MU Online for training and troubleshooting.
- **Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Accreditation Visit**
 - Rescheduled for March 30–31 due to weather related travel issues.

- Key themes to highlight during the visit:
 - Commitment to Marshall’s mission
 - High quality academic programs
 - Student success and post-graduation outcomes
 - Shared governance and continuous improvement
- **AI Task Force**
 - Newly reorganized task force led by Jodi Penrod and David Wiley.
 - Goals:
 - Integrate AI effectively into campus operations.
 - Equip students with AI competencies needed in modern professions.
- **Q:** A suggestion was made to use student wait time during orientation advising to introduce campus groups, clubs, and involvement opportunities.
 - **A:** Dr. Bookwalter agreed and expressed willingness to collaborate with orientation staff. He also encouraged creative ideas and welcomed further suggestions from advisors and staff.

Bruce Felder – Human Resources

- **Grounds and Operations Teams Recognition**
 - Bruce expressed deep appreciation for staff who worked through extreme winter conditions:
 - Grounds crew
 - Operations & Facilities volunteers
 - Housing & Residence Life staff
 - HR is developing a plan to formally recognize and thank these employees.
 - Bruce emphasized that the work performed was “outside of the scope” of normal expectations and deserving of acknowledgment.
- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**
 - Staff were reminded that EAP resources are available for stress, emotional strain, and personal challenges.
 - <https://www.marshall.edu/human-resources/employee-assistance-program-eap/>
- **Training Updates**
 - Compensation 102 Training
 - Now available to all employees.
 - Employees who completed Compensation 101 should have received an email notification.
 - Compensation 101 is also available as a video with a quiz through online learning partners.
 - Even if an employee attended Comp 101 in-person they do not need to retake the quiz unless they need official credit through the online system.
 - **Q:** Would taking trainings be considered accountability for evaluations?
 - **A:** Yes
- **Social Security Workshop**
 - Marshall is partnering with the local Social Security Administration office to offer a virtual seminar.
 - Date: March 25

- Session 1: 10:00–12:00
- Session 2: 1:30–3:30
- Sign up links will be distributed soon via:
 - We Are Marshall Newsletter
 - Email announcements
 - Upcoming staff call reminders
- This workshop is intended for employees nearing retirement or those wanting to better understand Social Security benefits.
- **Performance Evaluations**
 - Bruce reiterated the importance of reestablishing a culture of regular performance evaluations.
 - Evaluations support accountability, a theme also raised in the engagement survey.
 - They should focus on:
 - Shared goals
 - Continuous feedback
 - Employee growth
 - Alignment with departmental and university missions
 - Bruce emphasized that evaluations are not merely administrative tasks but opportunities to help employees become “a stronger, more effective version of themselves.”
- **Weather Policy Review**
 - Dr. Schulenberg reported that the Faculty Senate has asked the BAPC (Budget and Academic Policy Committee) to review the university’s weather policy in light of recent severe winter conditions.
 - Marshall lost multiple instructional days due to closures caused by extreme weather.
 - Peer institutions often have a “jump-to-virtual” option that allows instruction to continue during campus closures.
 - The BAPC is exploring a policy that would:
 - Allow faculty to shift to virtual instruction on weather closure days.
 - Ensure continuity of learning during winter storms or other emergencies.
 - Require appropriate support systems for faculty and students.
 - The proposal would be a change to UPGA-2 and would go out for campuswide comment.
 - <https://www.marshall.edu/policies/files/2025/05/UPGA-2-Policy-Regarding-Weather-Related-and-or-Emergency-Closings-and-Delays.pdf>
 - Bruce Felder added that he would like to piggyback on these proposed changes to include a staff component as well.
 - **Q:** Should Delays/Closures that occur on an essential employee’s scheduled day off have that time off be credited or removed?
 - **A:** Bruce said that if an employee is already scheduled off on a day that the university closes or delays for weather related reasons, that person would just be off and not get credit to take another day off or be paid an extra 7.5 hours.

- **Q:** If an employee has leave scheduled for a day that the governor gives a proclamation as a day off, does that person's leave get credited back?
 - **A:** Yes
- **Q:** When essential employees can't make it to work on their regularly scheduled weekend workday due to weather, can that be taken into consideration as a closure despite not actually closing classes so that the employee doesn't have to take a day of annual leave?
 - **A:** Bruce stated that he would want to talk to the divisional vice president and directors of that department to give them some autonomy to make that judgement call.

Sara Payne Scarbro – Government Relations

- **Legislative Activity to Date**
 - 2,672 bills introduced so far.
 - 56 bills directly reference higher education (on the formal watch list).
 - An additional ~35 bills are being monitored for potential amendments affecting higher ed (e.g., raffling, PEIA, concealed carry).
 - 7 bills have completed legislative action.
 - None directly impact higher education at this time.
- **Board of Governors Voting Rights Bills**
 - Two bills aim to restore voting rights removed in last year's legislation:
 - Senate Bill 551
 - Restores voting rights for faculty, employees, and students.
 - Sponsored by Senators Woelfel (Cabell) and Garcia.
 - Senate Bill 675
 - Restores voting rights only for students.
 - Lead sponsor: Oliverio; supporting sponsor: Garcia.
 - Both bills are in Senate Education with little hope for momentum this session.
- **Budget Developments**
 - Senate Budget
 - Includes a 10% personal income tax reduction.
 - House Budget
 - No tax reduction included.
 - Restores the 2% cut previously requested by Governor Morrissey for higher education budgets.
 - Higher Education Funding Formula
 - Implemented in the House version.
 - Does not yet include inflationary adjustments.
 - Early in the process; negotiations with the Senate still ahead.
 - Marshall School of Medicine Funding
 - House Finance advanced a measure allocating \$30 million to Marshall for a new medical school building.
 - This would match federal dollars already secured.
- **Marshall Day at the Capitol**
 - Sara celebrated the success of Marshall Day, noting:
 - Highest attendance ever

- Strong student participation (SGA, political science classes, engineering, med students, etc.)
- Positive feedback from legislators, especially about:
 - Marshall Morning breakfast
 - 3rd Ave. student performance

Carleen O’Neill – Board of Governors

Board of Governors Report - Condensed Unified Summary

Carleen O’Neill- Regular Meeting I February 5, 2026

Full official minutes available at: www.marshall.edu/board/board-of-governors-meeting-minutes/

Overview

- The Board of Governors held its regular meeting on February 5, 2026.
- No action items required approval during this session.

Academic Affairs - R. Bookwalter

College Highlights

- Arts & Media
 - Achieved major national recognition at the 2025 *Marcom Creative Awards*:
 - *3 Platinum, 6 Gold, 7 Honorable Mentions* for WMUL-FM.
- Engineering & Computer Science
 - Launched a *UAVforensics research partnership* with DroneTrace, LLC, expanding hands-on learning in cybersecurity and autonomous systems.
- Education & Professional Development
 - Earned *full CAEP accreditation* with no areas for improvement.
- Health Professions
 - Expanded clinical training through service to Hope Scholarship recipients at the Speech & Hearing Center.
- Liberal Arts
 - Strengthened pre-law advising and LSAT prep; students accepted into top schools including Harvard, Georgetown, Cornell, William & Mary, and Ohio State.
- Science
 - Advanced nationally recognized flood-prediction research in Eastern Kentucky, led by Dr. Mindy Yeager-Armstead.
- Division of Aviation
 - Expanded flight-training access in Lewisburg, WV, providing more single-license opportunities.
- Lewis College of Business
 - Highlighted student leadership as six accounting students represented the college at the national IMA Student Leadership Conference.

Swim & Dive

- Lauren McNamara: *The American Swimmer* of the Week
- Set new Marshall record in the 200 Butterfly
- Two athletes competed at the U.S. Open
- Earned dual-meet victories over FIU and JMU

Additional Notes

- Women's basketball: 10-game winning streak; best season since 1986-1987
- Men's basketball: 2nd best NET ranking in State
- Track & Field: 37 event wins & 4 school records broken
- Softball and Baseball seasons begin next week
- New Athletics Staff:
 - Max Remy, Chief of Staff
 - Cody Sparrow, Sr. Associate Director for Compliance & Student-Athlete Success

NCAA Legislation Update - Logo Placement

- Current rule allows only manufacturer logos.
- Proposed legislation would permit additional commercial logos on:
 - Uniforms (up to two)
 - Pre/post-game apparel
 - Equipment (one logo)
- Sport-specific sizing and placement rules to be defined.
- Effective August 1, 2026.
- Potential impact: increased revenue via Learfield partnership and logo sales.

Finance Update - Matt Tidd

Key Performance Highlights (Through January)

- Cash Forecast
 - OneStream implementation progressing
 - Improved visibility into financial health
 - FY26 year-end forecast remains stable
 - Pell Grant revenue increased by \$200,000 compared to FY25.

BOG Special Meeting – February 17th, 2026

The Board of Governor's met to decide to discontinue the Women's Swim and Dive program at Marshall and implement a new program called STUNT.

The Board raised several questions regarding the process, including transparency, the feasibility of delaying the decision for an additional year, and the manner in which the information was communicated to the MUSD team. Each concern was addressed directly and answered transparently.

Minutes

- The January 15th, 2026 minutes were approved as written.

Carleen O’Neill – ACCE

- Carleen attended the February 13th ACCE meeting via Zoom as a proxy for Heather Smith.
- Carleen echoed earlier comments from Government Relations regarding the slow movement of two bills related to restoring voting rights on the Board of Governors:
 - Senate Bill 675 – restores voting rights for students
 - Senate Bill 551 – restores voting rights for faculty, staff, and students
- ACCE invited Matt Turner, who is the Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration, and Adam Yates, who is the Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, to the meeting but they were unable to come.
- Jill Beaty from PEIA was invited to provide PEIA updates but was also unable to come.
- A compensation training was held by Melissa Carroll, who shared some interesting information on job pricing data and wage comparisons.

Classified Staff Council Committees

- **Elections/Communications Committee – Nina Barrett**

A special election was held to fill vacancies on Classified Staff Council. Congratulations to the winners. Those elected are as follows:

EEO 10 – Amy Weaver

EEO 30 – Mary Layne & Kathy Brannock

EEO 40 – Elizabeth Rexroad

EEO 50 – None

EEO 60/70 – Kimberly Crigler & Marcos Serrat

- **Legislative Committee – Larry Morris**

The committee is watching a few bills in particular:

- Senate Bill 5 – as it relates to campus law enforcement retirements
- Senate Bill 30 - as it relates to allowing 18-20 year olds to conceal carry weapons on campus.
- Senate Bill 236 – as it relates to changing verbiage around college campus trespassing laws.

- **Personnel/Finance Committee – Becky Lusher**

The committee has extended their meeting invitations to Bruce and Kelly in HR, and Katrina and Mike in budget as well as the Non-Classified Staff Council committee equivalent to our Personnel/Finance Committee.

- **Physical Environment Committee – Becky Lusher**
 - The Non-Classified Staff Council committee equivalent has been invited to this meeting as well.
 - The committee discussed restoring the no parking signs in the circle where the John Marshall statue is in front of Drinko Library. Signs will be back up soon.
 - Facilities is trying out a new ice melt that seems to have good results and saves money.

- **Staff Development/Service Committee – Tiffani Daniels – No report.**

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

Adkins, Jason	Elliott, Chloe	Marcum, Kelly	Roberts, Alice
Agnello, Tricia	Ellison, Marc	Martin, Madison	Rose, Angie
Al-Qawasmi, Husein	Eskins, Cara	Martin, Nick	Ross, Jerry
Anders, Brandi	Eskins, Katrina	Mathis, Anita	Roush, Emily
Arthur, Stacey	Fain, Cicero	Maynard, Kevin	Rowe, Kandice
Atkins, Christopher	Felder, Bruce	McComas, Karen	Russell, Megan
Bailey, Bonnie	Fleming, Justin	McDavid, Cristina	Saxton, Caleb
Bailey, Cara	Fry, Austin	McDavid, Sherry	Schulenberg, Shawn
Baldwin, Jesse	Gallaher, Melanie	McKenna, Char	Serrat, Marcos
Ball, Tricia	Gates, Lisa	McKinley, Garnet	Sharp, Tyler
Barrett, Nina	Gooding, Grace	McSweeney, Teresa	Shaver, Amanda
Bell, Jodi	Greenwood, Kenneth	Meade, Mitzi	Sheets, Elizabeth
Bibbee, Hailey	Hall, Cody	Means, Amanda	Simms, Marcie
Biggs, Michelle	Hall, Gary	Meddings, Teresa	Sims, Kristin
Bittinger, Lacie	Hanrahan, Elizabeth	Meeke, Rebecca	Slate, Nick
Bond, Cassi	Hardiman, Jean	Midkiff, Glen	Smith, Brad
Bookwalter, Robert	Harrold, Lisa	Midkiff, Susan	Smith, Heather
Booth, Jim	Hartman, Tiffany	Milam, Darrell	Smith, Tracy
Boyce, Charlotte	Hawthorne, Justin	Miller, Nathan	Sowards, Kelly
Brannock, Kathy	Hendrick, Ashley	Mills, Cassandra	Spradlin, Wes
Brown, Jennifer	Himes, Eric	Mirzakhani, Amad	Starcher-Patton, Autumn
Buchanan, Amy	Holiskey, Sam	Morgan, Brian	Stephens, Sarah
Burgess, Mary	Holmes, Linda	Morris, Larry	Stepp, Sherri
Burriss, Butch	Hughart, Bravin	Morrison, Michelle	Taylor, John
Call, Cody	Hunter, Todd	Murphy, Katherine	Taylor, Robin
Cantrell-Johnson, Sonja	Hurula, Carol	Murray, Heather	Thomas, Kim
Carey, Allison	Jacobs, Brandi	Nance, Jonathan	Thornton, Mindy
Carothers, Kelly	Jarrell, Jimmy	Nance, Robbie	Tidd, Matt
Chapman, Mary	Kennedy, Paige	Neace, Becky	Tolliver, Leah
Childers, David	King, Beverly	Nelson, Jeffrey	Trapp, Kyle
Clark, Ralph	King, Erin	O'Neill, Carleen	Tresch-Reneau, Nancy
Contreras, Kassandra	LaFon, Erin	Painter, Ginny	Ulrich, Sarah
Counts, Katie	Lambert, Scott	Parks, Denise	Vineyard, Jimil
Crawford, Dean	Langer, Jonathan	Payne, Leah	Walker, Bob
Cutler, Jon	Lapole, Christopher	Payne, Sara	Walker, Lacey
Cyrus, Meg	Layne, Mary	Perdue, Dee Dee	Waller, Mary
Daniels, Tiffani	Legg, Erik	Persinger, Daniel	Weber, Charlotte
Davis, Sarah	Levering, Susan	Powell, Tina	West, Lance
Dean, Benjamin	Lewis, Olivia	Price, Kelli	Wheeler, Michelle
Decker, Kaleigh	Lupashunski, Spencer	Price, Willa	Wiley, Denise
Dorado, Bob	Lusher, Becky	Ransbottom, Lisa	Wintz, Kathi
Dragovich, Isabella	Lusher, Bryce	Rexroad, Elizabeth	Workman, Missy
Dunbar, Shaylen	Mannan, Bindu	Rhodes, Jessica	Xu, Cindy
Edmonds, Ashley	Marcum, Darian	Risch, Christine	Young, Howard
			Young, Miriah