

Marshall University Classified Staff Council Minutes

July 16th, 2026 Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Jesse Baldwin, Nina Barrett, Lacie Bittinger, Kathy Brannock, Mark Brumfield, 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, Amy Weaver

Members Absent:

Members Absent (Excused):

Guests: Attached

Chair Lacie Bittinger called the meeting to order.

President Brad Smith

- **AI Strategic Retreat**
 - Held at the College of Business and included: university administration, family leadership representatives, academic deans, department chairs, and members of the AI operating committee.
 - Goal: ensure Marshall is ready to navigate the next three to five years, gather diverse perspectives, and develop actionable recommendations.
 - Examined how AI is transforming society, daily life, higher education, and Marshall in particular.
 - Retreat discussions were recorded, documented, summarized, and will be shared with the broader campus community and used to update Marshall's "plan on a page" by October 1st.
 - Guest Facilitators:
 - Paul LeBlanc: former president of Southern New Hampshire University for 21 years who led institutional growth from approximately 2,800 students to 250,000 students. Affiliated with Harvard Graduate School of Education and Gates Foundation AI research initiatives.
 - Rachel Hoblitz: instructional design expert who specializes in AI applications in higher education. Rachel provided educational and operational insights related to AI implementation.
 - 92% of participants completed extensive pre-work assignments including:
 - Summary of President Smith's campus listening tour.
 - Campus AI survey results from employees and students.
 - Benchmarking data from institutions across the country regarding AI adoption.
 - EDUCAUSE publications.
 - Paul LeBlanc's book, Reclaiming Purpose.
 - Participants completed a survey examining confidence in Marshall's readiness for AI, concerns and risks, and priority actions the university should pursue.
 - Survey findings included confidence in:
 - Marshall's culture: strong, people-centered and relationship-focused

- Shared governance and leadership groups
 - Trust that AI implementation will occur thoughtfully and responsibly.
 - AI's potential to improve academic advising, student success initiatives, and personalized learning experiences.
 - Belief that Marshall can embrace AI while maintaining its human-centered identity.
- Survey findings included concerns about:
 - AI may become an additional responsibility atop existing workloads.
 - Lack of consistency across academic units.
 - Student feedback revealed confusion regarding varying classroom AI policies and uncertainty about acceptable AI use.
 - Desire for a more consistent institutional approach while preserving faculty autonomy.
 - Risk concerns regarding data privacy, cybersecurity, environmental impacts, and maintaining critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Survey findings recommended the following priorities:
 - Develop a university-wide AI strategy with clear institutional framework and direction.
 - Ensure AI literacy and provide training for students, faculty, and staff.
 - Reevaluate and improve workflows before automating them to avoid simply accelerating inefficient processes.
 - Ensure technology enhances rather than replaces human relationships and engagement.
- **Athletics White Paper**
 - President Smith previewed an upcoming white paper titled: "From the Mountains, Not the Sidelines: The Future of College Athletics and Why This Moment Matters to Marshall University, Appalachia, and America." The paper examines major changes occurring in intercollegiate athletics and Marshall's role in responding to those changes.
 - The report addresses several disruptive trends:
 - Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) compensation.
 - Transfer portal activity.
 - Conference realignment.
 - Revenue sharing requirements.
 - Escalating coaching salaries.
 - Rising travel and operational expenses.
 - Marshall faces a choice to proactively influence these changes or allow external forces to dictate outcomes. Thus, the university intends to take a leadership role in shaping the future of college athletics.
 - President Smith emphasized:
 - Marshall's 189-year history.
 - More than 120,000 alumni.
 - Carnegie R2 research status.
 - The symbolism of the Thundering Herd as a community that moves toward challenges together.

- **Importance of Athletics to Marshall & The Community**

- Athletics serves as:
 - A key driver of national visibility.
 - A source of community pride.
 - An economic asset for Huntington and Appalachia.
 - A catalyst for enrollment growth.
 - A means of strengthening alumni engagement.
- Student Athlete Academic Achievements
 - President Smith highlighted several metrics:
 - Graduation Success Rate: 92%
 - Highest in the Sun Belt Conference.
 - Above the Division I national average.
 - Spring semester team GPAs ranged from 3.1 to 3.9.
 - 86 student-athletes achieved a perfect 4.0 GPA.
- Student Athlete Community Service Impact
 - Student-athletes contributed approximately 3,600 service hours during the year.
 - Activities included:
 - Reading in schools.
 - Supporting nonprofit organizations.
 - Mentoring youth.
 - Assisting charitable events.
 - Visiting hospitals.
 - Participating in community outreach initiatives.
- Marketing Impact of Marshall Athletics
 - Marshall Athletics generated:
 - Approximately 53 million social media impressions during the year.
 - Equivalent advertising value estimated at \$1.7 million.
 - Visibility benefits support:
 - Recruitment.
 - Enrollment.
 - Alumni engagement.
 - Institutional reputation.
- Economic Impact of Marshall Athletics
 - According to Marshall's Center for Business and Economic Research:
 - Every \$1 invested in Marshall Athletics generates \$1.63 in economic impact.
 - Represents a multiplier effect of 63 cents additional economic activity per dollar spent.
 - Marshall Athletics supports approximately:
 - 528 jobs connected to athletic events and related activities including event staff, hospitality workers, vendors, food service providers, and local businesses.
- Conferences
 - Marshall competes within the:
 - Sun Belt Conference

- The Sun Belt is among the strongest conferences in the Group of Six category.
 - The conference remains highly competitive across multiple sports.
 - Among 14 Sun Belt institutions:
 - Marshall ranks 13th in enrollment size.
 - Marshall has the lowest tuition costs.
 - Despite being one of the smallest institutions:
 - Marshall ranks among the top athletic spenders in the conference. This investment supports:
 - Enrollment growth.
 - Visibility.
 - University brand recognition.
- **Athletics Funding Model**
 - Athletics funding consists of:
 - 54% of athletic expenses are funded through university resources.
 - 46% generated through:
 - Ticket sales.
 - Fundraising.
 - Sponsorships.
 - Other athletics revenue sources.
 - 50/50 Model:
 - The university has challenged Athletics to reach 50% university support and 50% self-generated revenue.
 - Most college athletic programs do not generate net profit.
 - Even major institutions operate with financial challenges.
 - Ex: Despite bowl games generating conference payouts, the cost to participate is higher than the payout due to travel, lodging, team transportation and band participation. Despite financial losses, bowl participation remains valuable due to:
 - Increased enrollment interest.
 - Greater web traffic.
 - Enhanced alumni engagement.
 - Increased donor activity.
- **Athletics White Paper Policy Recommendations**
 - Prevent widening gaps between institutions.
 - Greater accountability regarding athlete compensation.
 - More equitable media rights distribution.
 - Preservation of Olympic sports and women's sports programs.
 - Uniform rules and standards across collegiate athletics.
 - The white paper encourages alumni and supporters to:
 - Attend athletic events.
 - Purchase tickets.
 - Make donations.
 - Support NIL initiatives.

- Invest in athletic facilities.
 - Promote Marshall Athletics across all sports.
- **Q:** Are there any plans to lobby the legislature to ask for more money for raises?
 - **A:** Yes, we do every year and we want to take care of our people. One method of our funding is a performance based funding formula in which we are paid more for better performance. We're also asking them to revisit the model of pay raises and make it more modern in context.
- **Q:** Has the university explored any options to help offset the recent increases in PEIA costs for employees, which has resulted in a reduction in pay for some?
 - **A:** Brad acknowledged the difficulties facing employees currently with inflation, insurance increases, gas prices, etc. and as a result they are exploring every possible angle. Marshall is trying to put money back into employees' pockets with Save-to-Serve, but acknowledge that it's not sufficient. Brad added that we have an enduring commitment that we want to make sure that our people are at market or better, but it won't be a quick fix.

Bruce Felder – Human Resources

- **Employee Suggestions and Cost-Saving Initiatives**
 - Bruce emphasized the importance of collective participation in identifying opportunities to improve university operations and efficiency.
 - Encouraged employees to continue submitting ideas through established channels, including the Staff Personnel Committee.
 - Bruce requested suggestions related to:
 - Cost savings.
 - Process improvements.
 - Reinvestment opportunities.
 - Elimination of waste or inefficiencies.
 - Creative alternatives for accomplishing university objectives.
- **Governor's Proclamation: July 2 Half-Day Holiday**
 - West Virginia Governor Patrick Morrisey issued a proclamation granting state employees a half-day holiday on July 2 in recognition of America's 250th birthday celebration.
 - Human Resources and Payroll reviewed leave records.
 - Employees who had previously scheduled annual leave during the affected time period had the applicable leave restored.
 - Adjustments were made through payroll and the TCP system.
 - Employees who believe their annual leave was not properly restored should contact Human Resources.
 - HR will review records and correct any missed adjustments.
- **Annual Employee Increment (AEI) Pay**
 - Annual Employee Increment (AEI), commonly referred to as longevity pay or years-of-service pay, is available to eligible employees after completing three years of service.
 - Eligible employees receive \$60 per year of service
 - Ex: An employee with 10 years of service would receive:

- 10 years × \$60 = \$600 AEI payment.
 - AEI payments become effective immediately and should appear on an upcoming paycheck that will be separate from employees' regular payroll checks.
- **PEIA System Update**
 - PEIA is transitioning to a new online user portal designed to provide:
 - Improved user experience.
 - Easier system access.
 - More modern functionality.
 - Faster processing capabilities.
 - A brief blackout period is in effect while PEIA implements the new system.
 - The new PEIA portal is expected to launch on August 1.
 - All PEIA users will be required to:
 - Create a new account.
 - Re-register in the new portal system.
 - Employees should watch for email communications system notifications and postal mail correspondence from PEIA.
 - Existing insurance coverage and benefits will remain unchanged.
 - The account registration requirement only affects portal access.
 - Employees will use the new system to:
 - View insurance plans and coverage information.
 - Manage qualifying life events.
 - Add or remove spouses and dependents.
 - Access benefits-related services.
- **PEIA Audits**
 - Employees who have experienced a recent divorce should update their dependent information within the new PEIA portal after it becomes available.
 - Employees may receive communications from Myers and Stauffer, a company conducting PEIA eligibility verification activities.
 - Employees receiving email or mailed requests from Myers and Stauffer should respond promptly.
- **Q:** In the compensation guidelines it mentions pay for performance increases. I was told "these are included to outline all compensation actions that may be available under different circumstances". Is there a date of when these increase will be available and how will they be handled?
 - **A:** The university's long-term objective is to link the annual employee evaluation process directly to salary increases.
 - Under the proposed model:
 - Annual performance evaluation scores would influence compensation increases.
 - Division leaders would receive allocated salary adjustment funds.
 - Departments would distribute increases based on employee performance ratings.
 - University leadership had initially hoped to implement pay-for-performance raises during the current compensation cycle.

- During budget planning discussions, the Budget Work Group identified two significant challenges that prevented implementation this year.
 - Limited State Funding
 - State appropriations were insufficient to support a meaningful pay-for-performance increase program.
 - Leadership determined that available funding would not provide salary adjustments significant enough to achieve the intended impact.
 - Compensation Equity Priorities
 - Leadership determined that available salary funding should first be used to bring employees closer to competitive market compensation levels.
- As a result, pay-for-performance raises were postponed while compensation market alignment efforts continued.
- The annual evaluation system is now open for the FY27 fiscal year and employees and supervisors should continue participating fully in the performance evaluation process.
- With compensation equity goals largely achieved, the university expects to focus more directly on performance-based salary increases moving forward.
- Future salary increases may consider individual employee performance and university performance.
- If performance-based funding becomes available, salary increase allocations would be provided to division and department leaders.
- Leaders would then distribute those funds among employees based on documented performance outcomes and evaluation results.
- **Q:** With the performance ratings, is it only at levels 3 and 4 that an employee may receive that possible raise?
 - **A:** No, some autonomy will be given to the department heads.

Minutes

- The June 18th, 2026 minutes were approved as written.

Heather Smith – ACCE Report

- **ACCE Website**
 - The ACCE Web and Communications Committee is preparing to review and update the organization's website over the coming months.
 - Staff members from all participating institutions are encouraged to submit suggestions for:
 - Additional website content.
 - Resources that would be beneficial to employees.
 - Improvements to existing information and navigation.
 - Employees are encouraged to visit the WVACCE website and provide feedback:
<https://wvacce.org/>
- **HEPC Update**
 - ACCE members received updates from Adam Yates, recently appointed Vice Chancellor for Human Resources at the Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC).

- Mr. Yates reported that the newly created HR System Specialist position has been filled.
- Mr. Yates provided an update regarding a HEPC classification and compensation position that was posted in mid-June and was scheduled to close on July 6th.
 - HEPC is considering revising and reposting the position because leadership expressed concerns regarding the quality and qualifications of the applicant pool received during the initial posting period.
 - The position focuses on:
 - Statewide job classification systems.
 - Compensation structure administration.
 - Position evaluation and classification processes.
 - Heather noted that Marshall University and West Virginia University operate under separate classification and compensation systems and have greater flexibility than many state agencies. However, the statewide position remains important because it supports human resources operations throughout West Virginia higher education.
- Staffing Changes
 - HEPC currently has significant employee turnover.
 - Approximately nine positions are either currently vacant or in the process of being posted and filled.
 - The Vice Chancellor for Community and Technical Colleges is leaving HEPC, which will create an additional leadership vacancy to be filled.
- WV 457 Deferred Compensation Notices
 - Employees who received communications regarding participation in the 457 plan should note that those notifications were sent in error as it does not apply to most higher education employees.
- **ACCE Retreat**
 - Heather announced that the ACCE annual retreat is scheduled for the following week and will run from Sunday through Tuesday.
 - Key objectives include:
 - Establishing priorities for the upcoming year.
 - Developing committee agendas and work plans.
 - Discussing employee concerns and statewide higher education issues.
 - Employees were encouraged to submit concerns, questions, or topics they would like to have raised during retreat discussions to Heather at heather.smith@marshall.edu.

Classified Staff Council Committees

- **Elections/Communications Committee – Nina Barrett** – No report.
- **Legislative Committee – Larry Morris** – No report.
- **Personnel/Finance Committee – Becky Lusher** – No report.
- **Physical Environment Committee – Becky Lusher**
- **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

Anders, Brandi	Hardiman, Jean	Moore, Valerie	Xu, Cindy
Bailey, Bonnie	Hawthorne, Justin	Moran, Terri	Young, Howard
Bailey, Travis	Hendrick, Ashley	Morgan, Brian	Young, Miriah
Baldwin, Jesse	Himes, Eric	Morgan, Jennifer	
Barrett, Nina	Hoffman, Austin	Morris, Larry	
Bell, Jodi	Holiskey, Sam	Mummert, Carl	
Biggs, Michelle	Holsclaw, Emily	Murphy, Katherine	
Bird, Hannah	Hughart, Bravin	O'Neill, Carleen	
Bittinger, Lacie	Hurula, Carol	Pack, Rebecca	
Bond, Cassi	Jacobs, Brandi	Painter, Ginny	
Booth, Jim	James, Brandi	Payne, Leah	
Bradley, Johnny	Kennedy, Paige	Penrod, Jodie	
Brannock, Kathy	King, Erin	Perry, Jody	
Brumfield, Mark	Kompanek, Simone	Persinger, Daniel	
Bryant, Kev	LaFon, Erin	Pillay, Gautam	
Brydie-Johnson, Laliccia	Langer, Jonathan	Pyles, Cora	
Burgess, Brent	Lauhon, Cheyenne	Ransbottom, Lisa	
Burriss, Butch	Layne, Mary	Rhodes, Jessica	
Byrd, Kevin	Legg, Erik	Roberts, Alice	
Call, Cody	Lemon, Leeann	Ross, Jerry	
Cantrell-Johnson, Sonja	Lemon, Megan	Rowe, Kandice	
Carey, Allison	Levering, Susan	Saxton, Caleb	
Carico, Paul	Lewis, Olivia	Serrat, Marcos	
Chaffin, Perry	Longoria, Jacob	Sharp, Tyler	
Chapman, Mary	Lupashunski, Spencer	Sims, Kristin	
Collins, Cynthia	Lusher, Becky	Slate, Nick	
Collins, Tabby	Lusher, Bryce	Smith, Brad	
Crawford, Dean	Marcum, Darian	Smith, Heather	
Curry, Ella	Marcum, Kelly	Spradlin, Wes	
Cyrus, Meg	Maynard, Becky	Stepp, Sherri	
Daniels, Tiffani	Maynard, Kevin	Taylor, John	
Decker, Kaleigh	McDade, Michael	Taylor, Robin	
Dorado, Bob	McDavid, Sherry	Thomas, Erica	
Dragovich, Isabella	McGhee, Otesha	Thomas, Seth	
Dunfee, Carey	McKenna, Char	Tidd, Matt	
Elizabeth Rexroad	McSweeney, Teresa	Ulrich, Sarah	
Eskins, Katrina	Meddings, Teresa	Vineyard, Jimil	
Fain, Cicero	Meek, Rebecca	Walker, Bob	
Felder, Bruce	Midkiff, Glen	Walker, Lacey	
Fischer, Karen	Midkiff, Susan	Weaver, Amy	
Fry, Austin	Miller, Nathan	West, Lance	
Gallagher, Melanie	Mills, Cassandra	Wheeler, Michelle	
Gates, Lisa	Mirzakhani, Amad	Williams, Allen	
Hamilton, Jacob	Moore, Patrick	Woods, Cameron	