

Marshall University Classified Staff Council Minutes

March 26th, 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, Amy Weaver

Members Absent: Mark Brumfield, Kimberly Crigler,

Members Absent (Excused):

Guests: Attached

Chair Lacie Bittinger called the meeting to order.

John Marshall Service Awards

- Bruce announced that the following employees were awarded the John Marshall Service Award for various outstanding services to the University:
 - **Toni Ferguson**
 - **Jonathan Crislip**
- 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

- Legislative Session
 - 2,777 bills introduced
 - 303 bills passed
 - 57 bills focused on higher education
 - 9 higher education bills became law
 - Budget:
 - Fully implemented the performance-based funding formula
 - Reversed a proposed 2% pay cut
 - Approved the Governor's 3% pay increase
 - The 3% increase applies only to the portion of salaries funded by the state (approximately 55% of total payroll).
 - The total effective increase for Marshall equates to:
 - ~\$2.2 million
 - ~1.6% of total base salaries
 - Legislative Investments
 - School of Medicine
 - \$30 million state matching grant approved
 - Matches \$31.8 million federal grant
 - Funding now covers approximately two-thirds of total project cost
 - West Virginia Grant Resource Center

- Fourth year of funding awarded
 - \$500,000 split evenly between Marshall and WVU
 - Program has generated ~\$52.5 million for counties over four years
 - West Virginia Research Collaboratory
 - \$1 million awarded to Marshall to coordinate statewide research efforts
 - Marshall will act as lead institution to match research needs with expertise across:
 - Marshall
 - WVU
 - West Virginia State University
 - Other institutions
- **Budget Planning**
 - Two budget scenarios had been prepared:
 - Flat budget with final year of 5% “Save to Serve”
 - 2% reduction plus “Save to Serve”
 - The final adopted budget reflects the more favorable scenario:
 - Flat budget
 - Final year of 5% “Save to Serve”
 - Finance staff have worked with departments to roll up budget totals.
 - Budget Advisory Committee (shared governance) is collaborating with Finance.
 - Board of Governors review scheduled for early April.
 - Campus-wide communication to follow Board approval.
- **Pay Increases**
 - The Budget Advisory Committee proposed a progressive allocation model where pay increases will be given based on the following income tiers:
 - First \$40,000: 2% increase
 - \$41,000–\$80,000: 1.75% increase
 - \$81,000–\$120,000: 1.5% increase
- **Market Adjustment Funding**
 - In addition to state funding, Marshall will contribute \$550,000 from Save to Serve for market adjustments.
 - This funding will:
 - Apply to both staff and some faculty
 - Bring all applicable employees to 80–120% of market midpoint
 - With this action, Marshall expects to achieve full market alignment for employees by the end of the budget cycle.
- **Women’s Swim and Dive**
 - The initial recommendation to discontinue the program was based on:
 - Title IX proportionality
 - Marshall student population: 57% women, 43% men
 - Athletics participation must reflect enrollment
 - Football rosters complicate compliance
 - Financial sustainability
 - Athletics currently subsidized by the university at ~54.5%
 - Goal is to reach a 50/50 funding model

- Infrastructure costs
 - Division I pool maintenance and equipment requirements are substantial
- Decision Reversal
 - After the initial announcement, new legal guidance indicated:
 - Eliminating a women's sport before adding another could place Marshall outside Title IX "safe harbor" protections
 - Leadership determined that:
 - Litigation would be costly, divisive, and counter to Marshall's values
 - Decision:
 - Women's Swim and Dive was reinstated
- **Listening Tour Progress**
 - To date:
 - 12 sessions completed
 - 18 sessions remaining
 - All listening session recordings will be analyzed using AI tools to:
 - Identify themes
 - Generate word clouds
 - Surface shared priorities
- **External Strategic Support**
 - Marshall has engaged Paul LeBlanc, former President of Southern New Hampshire University, as a volunteer advisor.
 - LeBlanc:
 - Led SNHU's growth from 10,000 to 200,000 students
 - Has spent two years working globally with the Gates Foundation
 - Focuses on AI, digital learning, and future-ready education models
 - He will:
 - Facilitate leadership and strategy workshops over the summer
 - Share insights from his upcoming book
- **Strategic Plan Refresh**
 - Inputs will include:
 - Listening tour feedback
 - AI analysis
 - External expertise from LeBlanc
 - Participants include deans, department chairs, five-family leadership, AI Task Force, Cabinet, and Board of Governors
 - Outcome:
 - A refreshed "Marshall for All" Plan on a Page
 - This will guide our direction for the next 3-5 years
 - A draft will be shared with campus stakeholders in the fall for feedback prior to finalization.

Dr. Mark Zanter – College of Arts and Media

- Dr. Zanter addressed the group to provide a brief update on the mural project planned for the west side of the Smith Music Hall.
- The project is currently in the final phase of public comment and feedback.

- Three mural designs have been developed, with significant contributions from Nicole Westfall, who has led the design work over the past six to eight months.
- Dr. Zanter shared several resources with meeting participants via the chat:
 - A webpage displaying the three mural designs along with historical context:
<https://www.marshall.edu/art/mark/>
 - A YouTube video offering a virtual walkthrough of the mural concepts:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tMKrKZ8PZA&list=PLljna-a3zoQ4qELrb8UNoIX3_feZ9g4aL&index=3
 - A Microsoft Forms survey allowing participants to rank the three designs based on preference: [Mural Design Comment – Fill out form](#)
- The project has already received approximately 300 responses, and additional community input is strongly encouraged.

Interim Provost Dr. Bookwalter – Academic Affairs

- **Spring Enrollment**
 - Spring enrollment remains strong and growing:
 - Total enrollment: 12,372 students
 - Increase of approximately 350 students over last spring
 - Nearly 3% year over year growth
 - FTTE (Full-Time Tuition Equivalency):
 - Approximately 8% increase (+673 FTTE) compared to last spring
 - Represents strong growth in the “paying student” segment
 - First-time, full-time freshmen:
 - Up nearly 4%
 - Online enrollment:
 - Increased by 17% year over year
 - Growth aligns with continued expansion of online academic programs
 - Areas showing decline:
 - Graduate and professional enrollment:
 - Still above 3,000 students
 - Down approximately 7.5%
 - First-generation enrollment:
 - Down approximately 4.5%
- **College Enrollment Trends**
 - Most colleges experienced enrollment growth ranging from 2.5% to 11%
 - Exceptions:
 - College of Education:
 - Enrollment declined by approximately 4%
 - College of Engineering:
 - Enrollment down approximately 1.5%
- **Fall Enrollment**
 - Fall enrollment pipeline is very promising:
 - Over 9,000 applications received
 - 12% increase compared to same point last year
 - Admitted students: Up 31%

- Intent-to-enroll: Up 4%
 - Orientation registration: Currently down approximately 18%
 - Key focus:
 - Converting admitted and intent-to-enroll students into:
 - Orientation participation
 - Summer campus engagement
 - Fall course registration
 - Dr. Bookwalter emphasized the importance of on-campus experiences to reinforce students' commitment to enroll.
 - He credited the Enrollment Management team for sustaining growth momentum.
 - Noted that Marshall is now replacing final cohorts from a 12-year enrollment decline with four consecutive years of growing classes, positioning the university for strong total enrollment moving forward.
- **Budget**
 - Bookwalter referenced President Smith's earlier detailed budget discussion.
 - He noted:
 - The Budget Advisory Committee, on which he serves, continues weekly meetings.
 - Review includes both academic and support unit budgets.
 - A proposed budget will be presented to the Board of Governors on April 8.
 - Outstanding budget questions are expected to be resolved following Board approval.
- **College of Liberal Arts Dean Search**
 - The COLA Dean search is well underway:
 - Three finalists on campus during the current week
 - Two more finalists scheduled to interview the following week
 - A public search website is available:
 - marshall.edu/cola-dean-search
 - Campus engagement:
 - Candidate profiles available online
 - Campus presentations livestreamed
 - Feedback from faculty, staff, and stakeholders strongly encouraged
- **Digital Accessibility Initiative**
 - Ongoing campus-wide effort to improve accessibility of:
 - Websites
 - Documents
 - Digital content
 - Digital Accessibility Fixathon:
 - Date: March 27th
 - Time: 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM
 - Locations:
 - Drinko Library Room 349
 - Drinko Library Room 138
 - Featuring external partners from Adobe and Blackboard
 - Target: Reach 80–85% digital accessibility compliance by the end of April

- **Higher Learning Commission (HLC) Accreditation Site Visit**
 - Dates: Monday, March 30th and Tuesday, March 31st
 - Focus areas they will be assessing:
 - Mission alignment
 - Transparency and integrity
 - Academic freedom
 - Assessment of teaching and learning
 - Strategic planning and governance
 - Open Sessions for Campus Participation:
 - Monday: 2:45–3:45 PM — Drinko Library Atrium
 - Tuesday: 11:00 AM–12:00 PM — Drinko Library Atrium
 - Open to all faculty and staff to provide feedback and perspectives on Marshall’s mission and operations.
- **Upcoming Events**
 - Marshall Bound Event:
 - Saturday, March 28th in the Engineering Building
 - For admitted students to engage with faculty and programs
 - Research Symposium:
 - Next Wednesday, April 1st, all day
 - Marshall General Faculty Meeting:
 - April 9
 - Green & White Days:
 - April 10–11
 - Includes Green & White Game and Alumni Weekend activities
 - Spring Commencement:
 - May 9

Bruce Felder – Human Resources

- **Benefits**
 - Open Enrollment Period: April 2 – May 15
 - Employees may:
 - Change existing benefits
 - Elect new benefits
 - Preview link to the PEIA Shopper’s Guide: https://peia.wv.gov/Forms-Downloads/Documents/shopper%27s_guides/2027_BenefitGuide.pdf allows employees to review:
 - New rates
 - Plan changes
 - New benefit offerings
 - Huntington Area Benefits Fair
 - April 7th from 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM
 - Location: Marshall University Student Center
 - Hosted on campus for the first time
 - Open to all state agencies, including:
 - Marshall University

- MCTC
 - Department of Highways
 - Other local state offices
 - Sponsored by PEIA
 - Vendors in attendance include:
 - Mountaineer Health Benefits
 - FBMC
 - Additional benefit providers
 - Voluntary Benefits Support Sessions
 - Provider: Mountaineer Flex Benefits
 - Covers benefits such as:
 - Dental, vision, hearing
 - Legal plans
 - Accident and critical illness coverage
 - Short and long term disability
 - Dates: April 23–24
 - Time: 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM
 - Location: Old Main, Room 323 (HR Training Room)
 - PEIA representatives will also be on campus April 24
- **Learning**
 - Retention Trends
 - Faculty retention: ~91%
 - Non-classified staff retention: ~93%
 - Classified staff retention: ~84%
 - Short term goal: 88%
 - Long term goal: 90%+
 - Benchmarking study:
 - Marshall currently ranks 5th among 12 similarly situated WV institutions
 - Action plan includes:
 - Studying practices at higher retention institutions
 - Examining salary, benefits, accommodations, and workplace supports
 - Recruitment Metrics
 - Average time to fill positions:
 - Reduced from ~56 days (one year ago)
 - Now averaging ~30 days
 - Indicates increased interest in working at Marshall and improved hiring processes
 - Data Driven HR Approach
 - HR is now tracking and analyzing:
 - Retention and exit interviews
 - Leave usage
 - Time to hire
 - Salary data
 - Budgeted vs. actual filled positions per pay period
 - Savings and staffing efficiencies are being identified through these analyses

- Action Learning Teams across campus continue to support improvement efforts
- Recognition given to the iCenter for deploying “Innovation Catalysts” to promote best practices. [iCenter | MUIC Program](#)
- **Training**
 - Compensation 102 Training
 - Available for supervisors and employees
 - Covers four approaches to compensation:
 - Market analysis
 - Across the board increases (when feasible)
 - Tiered distribution increases
 - Performance based compensation (emerging approach)
 - Training has received positive feedback and is encouraged for all employees
 - Register here: <https://www.marshall.edu/human-resources/hr-training/compensation-102/>
 - **Q:** Can anyone take the Comp 102 training?
 - **A:** Yes, anyone can take the training, not just managers. Comp 101 Training is a prerequisite for Comp 102 training, which can be viewed here:
<https://marshall.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=6e31e602-7a1b-4c75-9dad-b3fa0112a4...>
 - Social Security Workshops
 - Recent virtual seminar held with two sessions:
 - Attendance: ~100 employees total
 - Focus:
 - Retirement planning
 - Aligning Social Security benefits with retirement goals
 - Plan to offer similar sessions each semester
 - Next session already being scheduled for the fall
- **Executive Director / Vice President of Research Search**
 - Position: Executive Director of the Research Corporation and Vice President of Research
 - Status:
 - Finalists expected on campus in mid May
 - Decision anticipated around June 1
 - An executive search firm and formal search committee are supporting the process
 - Faculty and staff are invited to submit names of qualified candidates for consideration

Minutes

- The February 19th, 2026 minutes were approved as written.

Heather Smith – ACCE

- An ACCE meeting was held on March 9.
- The meeting was originally scheduled as a West Virginia Government Council (WGC) meeting but was converted to Zoom.
- Progress was made related to the ACCE Retreat Committee:

- The annual ACCE retreat is planned for July
- Location: Twin Falls State Park
- **ACCE Benefits Committee**
 - The ACCE Benefits Committee is working to organize a discussion with Flexible Benefits providers in order to:
 - Be good consumers and keep prices as low as possible.
 - Additional details will be shared with the group once the discussion is scheduled.
- **ACCE Website**
 - ACCE is prioritizing updates to public facing information, particularly:
 - Improving ACCE's website as a resource for classified staff across institutions.
 - wvacce.org
 - Heather invited attendees to:
 - Review the site in the coming weeks
 - Share suggestions or requests for additional resources
 - Email feedback directly to her
- **Legislative Engagement**
 - ACCE's Legislation Committee and membership have continued efforts to engage with legislators.
 - Engagement during the most recent legislative session was limited.
 - While the group monitored legislation affecting classified staff, opportunities to influence outcomes were reduced this session.
 - Legislative advocacy remains a primary focus for ACCE and is expected to improve in future sessions.
- **PEIA Benefits Presentation**
 - During the most recent ACCE meeting, a presentation was given by Jill Beatty, PEIA Benefit Coordinator Liaison.
 - Jill provided a highly informative overview and demonstrated strong responsiveness to questions and concerns.
 - Employees who have unresolved PEIA questions were encouraged to:
 - Attend upcoming PEIA events on campus
 - Contact Heather Smith for Jill Beatty's contact information if needed
- **Upcoming PEIA Plan Changes**
 - PEIA will be implementing plan name changes for the upcoming plan year.
 - Purpose:
 - Help members more clearly understand the value of their coverage.
 - General structure (as described):
 - Plan A → Gold
 - Plan B → Silver
 - Plan C → Bronze
 - Plan D → Different/alternate structure
 - Heather noted:
 - While plan names will change, coverage changes appear limited.
 - Employees should still carefully review options to ensure they select the most appropriate plan.

- Jill Beatty is scheduled to be on campus April 24, reinforcing the importance of attending upcoming benefits events.

Classified Staff Council Committees

- **Elections/Communications Committee – Nina Barrett** – No report.
- **Legislative Committee – Larry Morris**
 - Senate Bill 5 (Exempting WV campus police officer retirement income from personal income tax after specified date)
 - Reported to have stalled in committee.
 - Senate Bill 551 (Restoring voting rights to faculty, student, and employee members of institutional boards of governors)
 - Reported to have stalled in committee.
- **Personnel/Finance Committee – Becky Lusher** – Discussed catastrophic leave policy and discussed facilities employees being able to cross train with other skill trades. Bruce is working on this.
- **Physical Environment Committee – Becky Lusher** – Discussed no parking signs in the John Marshall Statue circle.
- **Staff Development/Service Committee – Tiffani Daniels** – The committee met with the HR Training and Development Coordinator and found out that Online Learning is actually who sets up trainings. Employees are also encouraged to attend the Compensation 102 training.

Announcements

- CPR Training – the CPR training on April 14th and 15th is open to all staff, not just faculty.
- UPAA-32 Pregnancy And Related Conditions Policy For Students is now up for review on the Board of Governor’s website at <https://www.marshall.edu/policies/>. The deadline for comments is April 7, 2026.

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

Adams, Diana	Counts, Katie	Lauhon, Cheyenne	Parker, Dicky	Walker, Lacey
Adkins, Jason	Crawford, Dean	Layne, Mary	Payne, Leah	Waller, Mary
Akagbue, Bertha	Curry, Ella	Lemon, Leeann	Penrod, Jodie	Weaver, Amy
Allen, Lisa	Cutler, Jon	Lemon, Megan	Perry, Jody	West, Lance
Allen, Mike	Cyrus, Meg	Lester, Amy	Persinger, Daniel	Wheeler, Michelle
Anders, Brandi	Daniels, Tiffani	Lopez, Sebastian	Powell, Tina	Williams, Allen
Arens, Clay	Davis, Sarah	Lucas, Taylor	Price, Willa	Woods, Cameron
Atkins, Christopher	Dean, Benjamin	Lusher, Becky	Pullen, Lief	Xu, Cindy
Bailey, Bonnie	Decker, Kaleigh	Lusher, Bryce	Ransbottom, Lisa	Young, Howard
Bailey, Cara	Dragovich, Isabella	Marcum, Darian	Rexroad, Elizabeth	Young, Miriah
Bailey, Travis	Drake, Laura A	Marcum, Kelly	Rhodes, Jessica	Zanter, Mark
Baldwin, Jesse	Dunbar, Shaylen	Martin, Lisa	Riley, Erika	
Barrett, Nina	Dunmore, Holly	Martin, Nick	Risch, Christine	
Bell, Jodi	Edmonds, Ashley	Massie, Linda	Roblero, Amanda	
Bevans, Jean Ann	Edmonds, Travis	Maynard, Kevin	Rodkey, Sarah	
Bibbee, Hailey	Elliott, Chloe	McDade, Michael	Rose, Angie	
Biggs, Michelle	Ellison, Marc	McDavid, Cristina	Roush, Emily	
Bittinger, Lacie	Eskins, Katrina	McDavid, Sherry	Rowe, Kandice	
Bond, Cassi	Fain, Cicero	McDonald, Carissa	Russell, Megan	
Bookwalter, Robert	Felder, Bruce	McKenna, Char	Saunders, Patricia	
Booth, Jim	Fischer, Karen	McKinley, Garnet	Schulenberg, Shawn	
Booth, Sharon	Fry, Austin	McSweeney, Teresa	Serrat, Marcos	
Bowen, John	Fulks, Allison	Meade, Mitzi	Sharp, Tyler	
Boyce, Charlotte	Gallaher, Melanie	Meddings, Teresa	Sheets, Elizabeth	
Branham, Maddy	Gates, Lisa	Meek, Rebecca	Simms, Marcie	
Brannock, Kathy	Harber, Heath	Midkiff, Glen	Smith, Brad	
Brown, Jennifer	Harrold, Lisa	Midkiff, Susan	Smith, Heather	
Brydie-Johnson, Lalicia	Hartman, Tiffany	Milam, Darrell	Smith, Jami	
Buchanan, Amy	Hawthorne, Justin	Miller, Nathan	Smith, Tracy	
Burgess, Brent	Hendrick, Ashley	Mirzakhani, Amad	Smith-Holmes, Demeley	
Burriss, Butch	Henshaw, Kit	Moore, Patrick	Spradlin, Wes	
Bush, Jesseka	Himes, Eric	Moran, Terri	Starcher-Patton, Autumn	
Call, Cody	Hoffman, Austin	Morgan, Brian	Stepp, Sherri	
Canterbury, Thomas	Holiskey, Sam	Morris, Larry	Taylor, John	
Cantrell-Johnson, Sonja	Holsclaw, Emily	Morrison, Michelle	Taylor, Robin	
Carey, Allison	Hughart, Bravin	Mummert, Carl	Thomas, Erica	
Carothers, Kelly	Hurula, Carol	Murphy, Katherine	Thomas, Kim	
Celdran, Sophia	Jacobs, Brandi	Murray, Heather	Thornton, Mindy	
Chaffin, Perry	Jarrell, Jimmy	Murray, Sarah	Tidd, Matt	
Chapman, Courtney	Kompanek, Simone	Nance, Jonathan	Trapp, Kyle	
Chapman, Mary	LaFon, Erin	Nance, Robbie	Tresch-Reneau, Nancy	
Childers, David	Lambert, Scott	O'Neill, Carleen	Ulrich, Sarah	
Clark, Ralph	Langer, Jonathan	Pack, Rebecca	Vance, Ryan	
Contreras, Cassandra	Lapole, Christopher	Painter, Ginny	Walker, Bob	