

Marshall University Classified Staff Council Minutes May 21st, 2026 Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Jesse Baldwin, Kathy Brannock, David Childers, Dean Crawford, Tiffani Daniels, Mary Layne, Becky Lusher, Nick Martin, Larry Morris, Carleen O’Neill, Elizabeth Rexroad, Heather Smith, Amy Weaver

Members Absent: Mark Brumfield, Kimberly Crigler, Nathan Miller, Marcos Serrat, Nancy Tresch-Reneau,

Members Absent (Excused): Nina Barrett, Lacie Bittinger,

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:
 - **Heather Murray**
- 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

- Listening Tour 2.0 – Status and Next Steps
 - **Progress:**
 - 27 out of 30 listening sessions completed.
 - Remaining sessions are nearing completion.
 - Sessions have been thoughtful, candid and highly informative.
 - **Next Steps:**
 - All notes and recordings will be uploaded into a machine learning tool for synthesis and categorized into:
 - **“No-regret decisions”**
 - Items requiring no further analysis.
 - Immediate action will be taken.
 - **Strategic imperatives**
 - More complex issues requiring action learning teams or integration into ongoing operational processes.
 - **Timeline:**
 - Findings will be brought back to campus in the fall for review and discussion.
- Summer Workstreams Overview
 - President Smith outlined four major workstreams for summer:

1. Student Success Action Learning Team

- Led by Brian Morgan
- Approximately 15 members including internal subject matter experts and shared governance representatives
- The goal is to conduct both internal and external assessments and develop a Marshall-specific student success model.
- Primary Goals:
 - Increase student retention rates:
 - Current: Mid-70% range (71%–79%)
 - Goal: Consistently above 80%
 - Improve graduation rates:
 - Currently slightly below peer institutions (Sunbelt/Southeast)
 - Goal: Meet and exceed peers
 - Reduce equity gaps:
 - Focus on disparities between Pell-eligible and non-Pell students
- Student Experience Focus:
 - Create a seamless support model:
 - Eliminate fragmentation across departments
 - Ensure coordinated, cross-unit support
 - Shift to proactive interventions:
 - Real-time identification of struggling students
 - Immediate outreach rather than delayed reporting
 - Use data-informed decision-making supported by technology
 - Develop a “one-stop” student support model:
 - Students experience a single point of contact
- Strategic Importance:
 - Retention is more valuable than recruitment due to:
 - Longer student lifecycle
 - Greater long-term institutional and societal impact

2. Enrollment Cliff Scenario Planning

- We are facing a nationwide demographic decline:
 - 10% fewer 18-year-olds (Fall 2026–2041)
 - West Virginia impact: 26% decline
- Marshall has outperformed national trends, continuing growth.
- Fall projection:
 - Budget assumption: ~1% growth
 - Current funnel range:
 - Low: 0.7%
 - High: ~3%
- Marshall plans to conduct “if/then” scenario planning, including:
 - Flat enrollment scenarios

- Strategies to prevent financial deficits
- Work led with Budget Advisory Committee
- Includes representation from all five shared governance groups
- Initial discussions already underway

3. Administrative Efficiency Review

- Marshall plans to engage an external consulting partner to assess operations.
- End-to-end review of administrative processes and systems.
- Identify opportunities for:
 - Improved efficiency
 - Cost savings
 - Process modernization
- “Save to Serve” initiatives have largely maximized supply/service savings but additional efficiencies are needed to support:
 - Salary increases
 - Deferred maintenance
- Ex: Class scheduling inefficiencies
 - Currently we are using a manual process, but plan to implement software called Ad Astra
 - This could potentially save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

4. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategic Initiative

- Paul LeBlanc (former Southern New Hampshire University President) will help develop a comprehensive, institution-wide AI strategy.
- Participation will also include:
 - Deans
 - Faculty
 - Five Families
 - AI Operating Committee
- They will evaluate how AI impacts:
 - Teaching
 - Student experience
 - Research
 - Administrative functions

Fall Planning & Strategic Refresh

- We will work to consolidate the data from the listening tour, action learning team findings, scenario planning outputs, and AI strategy input.
- We will draft a strategic refresh plan that will include updated priorities and direction.
- Engagement will include open forums, faculty senate and leadership meetings.
- The plan is to have this refined and finalized in the fall.
- This will position Marshall University for the next 3-5 years.

Interim Provost Dr. Bookwalter – Academic Affairs

- **Leadership Changes and Searches**
 - Provost: Dr. Diane Petrello will join in July.
 - Executive Director, Drinko Academy: Dr. Gerald Kroll will replace Monserrat Miller.
 - Interim Dean, College of Health Professions: Scott Davis after retirement of Dean Mike Prewitt.
 - Dean, College of Liberal Arts: Chris Morrow
 - Vice President for Research:
 - Search ongoing.
 - Campus visits underway.
 - Announcement expected soon.
 - Departures
 - Robert Bookwalter
 - Vice President John Maher
- **Fall Enrollment Projections**
 - Expected growth range:
 - Low: 0.7%
 - High: 3.1%
 - Final outcome dependent on successful conversion of admitted students into enrolled students via orientation participation.
- **Orientation**
 - Strong emphasis on converting intent-to-enroll students into enrolled students.
 - Orientation schedule:
 - First session: June 9–12 (*fully booked*)
 - Additional sessions: July and August (filling)
 - Activities will focus on welcoming students to campus and creating a sense of belonging.
- **Recruitment & Engagement**
 - Strategic Enrollment Management team actively:
 - Contacting students
 - Encouraging attendance at orientation
 - Deans and department chairs:
 - Encouraged to personally reach out to admitted students
 - Reinforce program quality and student confidence
- **Retention & Continuing Students**
 - Retention: Currently in the mid-70% range
 - Slightly behind same point last year
 - Identifying students not yet registered for fall
 - Outreach is being conducted by advisors and program directors
 - Graduate students often register later (August), creating temporary lag
- **Institutional Emphasis**
 - “All hands on deck” approach to:
 - Support students from admission to enrollment

- Maximize both new enrollment and retention
- **Program Review Cycle (Academic Affairs)**
 - Annual review of approximately 20% of academic programs.
 - Recommendations to be presented to the Board of Governors June meeting.
 - Reviews include:
 - Faculty Senate input
 - College leadership input
 - Administrative review
 - Majority of programs recommended to continue at current level of support.
 - Programs Recommended for Consolidation:
 - Biomechanics (undergraduate & graduate)
 - Exercise Science (undergraduate & graduate)
 - Programs Recommended for Improvement
 - Computer Information Technology
 - Cybersecurity (Master's)
 - Programs Recommended for Expansion
 - Cyber Forensics and Security (Bachelor's)
 - Athletic Training (Master's)
 - Environmental Science (Bachelor's)
 - Programs Recommended for Discontinuation
 - Degree Programs:
 - Computer Information Science (Bachelor's)
 - Journalism (Master's)
 - Cyber Forensics and Security (Master's)
 - Content already absorbed into another program (College of Engineering)
 - Certificate Programs (Low Enrollment):
 - Digital Communication
 - Digital Forensics
 - Integrated Strategic Communication
 - Media Management
 - Academic Affairs not only adds programs, but also consolidates programs, improves underperforming programs, and discontinues low-performing programs.
 - This allows Marshall to maintain relevance, efficiency, and alignment with student and workforce needs
- **Accessibility Compliance Update**
 - Federal/required accessibility deadline moved to April 2027.
 - Institutional Targets:
 - End of Summer: 80% compliance
 - End of Fall: 90% compliance
 - April Deadline: 100% compliance
 - Focus Areas include websites, course materials on blackboard, online courses, and promotional and instructional content.
 - Dedicated teams working throughout summer

- **Ombuds Office Report**
 - Report submitted by Dr. Reiner and LeKesha Taylor indicated that the office, which serves both faculty and staff, has the capacity for increased usage and encourages engagement.
 - Services and Resources
 - Confidential support for:
 - Workplace concerns
 - Conflict resolution
 - Communication challenges
 - Providing:
 - Workshops
 - Micro-credentials
 - Online resources
- **Fairness & Shared Governance**
 - There have been increased concerns about fairness in decision-making.
 - Dr. Bookwalter recommended reinforcing understanding and application of the Shared Governance Charter
- **Exit Interviews**
 - It has been recommended to implement a more structured exit interview process to gather feedback from departing employees to improve processes, workplace environment, and collaboration.

Bruce Felder – Human Resources

- **Open Enrollment**
 - Open Enrollment was April 2nd – May 15th, and has now concluded.
 - On-campus assistance included Mountain State Benefits and PEIA Representatives.
- **PEIA Audit Updates**
 - Divorce Audit is ongoing.
 - Employees must ensure ineligible ex-spouses are removed.
 - Consequences for non-compliance include repayment of incorrectly paid premiums and other medical expenses like doctor visits and procedures.
 - Non-Smoking Waiver Audit
 - Employees may receive \$50 premium discount for declaring non-smoking status.
 - The audit process includes review of medical records to verify accuracy of declarations.
 - Spousal Surcharge Audit
 - New and high-priority audit initiative by PEIA.
 - Applies to employees with spouses on family health plans.
 - If spouse has access to employer-sponsored insurance elsewhere, employee must pay a spousal surcharge if they remain on PEIA plan.
 - If no other coverage available, no surcharge applies.
 - Audit Process:

- PEIA has partnered with Myers and Stauffer (third-party auditing firm)
- Employees will receive official email communication from this firm and follow-up letters if no response.
 - If ignored, coverage may be affected and employees may be required to repay premiums retroactively and cover medical costs incurred.
 - Estimated financial impact is potentially \$1,000-\$2,000 to reinstate coverage.
- Audits will be conducted in monthly waves of approximately 1,500 employees per wave statewide.
- This will eventually apply to all family plans with spouses.
- Employees are encouraged to contact HR with questions or to forward audit communications for assistance. HR is committed to helping employees avoid incorrect changes or penalties.
- **Pay Increase Implementation**
 - A draft of employee salary letters is currently under review with HR and Marketing/Communications. It will be shared with Vice Presidents early the following week.
 - Letters will be distributed to employee June 9th via email and department hard copy.
 - Letters will clearly outline individual increase amounts and adjustments, if any.
- **Salary Increase Structure**
 - Tiered distribution model – applies to majority of employees
 - Employees earning \$40,000 or less:
 - 2% increase
 - Above \$40,000:
 - Incrementally reduced percentage increases
 - Based on tiered salary bands
 - Sample salary calculator available on MyMU
- **Market Adjustments (Compa Ratio)**
 - \$500,000 of Save-to-Serve funds will be distributed to approximately 260 employees to bring them to at least 80% compa ratio, which is the competitive market range.
- **Minimum Wage Adjustment**
 - The new institutional minimum will be \$14/hour.
 - This will apply after tiered increases and market adjustments.
 - It will affect approximately 68 individuals, who will receive an additional increase to meet the minimum threshold.

Jodie Penrod – IT

- **Banner System Outage**
 - Banner, which is hosted in the Oracle Cloud, had a patch applied by Ellucian Professional Services on Sunday, which created unexpected system problems, resulting in service disruption.
 - MUIT team diagnosed and addressed the problem internally after a delay time in receiving vendor support. System functionality was restored.

- Jodie expressed strong appreciation for:
 - MU IT team's responsiveness and expertise.
 - Their ability to resolve a complex and critical issue.
- Users were asked to report any lingering issues or system inconsistencies.
- **Policies and Procedures Open for Review**
 - Technology Project Management Policy is currently open for campus comment.
 - The policy defines how IT projects are prioritized, managed, and scheduled.
 - IT is currently managing 60+ active or pending projects.
 - Campuswide review and feedback is encouraged.
 - Video Surveillance Policy (UPGA 15)
 - The policy was developed in partnership with Facilities and Operations and the MU Police Department to establish guidelines for video surveillance use on campus.
 - Next steps will include evaluating and selecting a standardized vendor solution.
 - Target timeline is 60-90 days.
 - Campuswide review and feedback is encouraged.
- **AI Initiatives and Technology Tools**
 - Marshall launched its first AI powered service agent, which is available through the my support portal and the Marshall University website.
 - The program provides faster responses to common questions and access to knowledge based resources.
 - Users can still connect to a live support agent if needed.
 - This will reduce wait time and improve response efficiency given limited staff availability.
 - Users are encouraged to test the tool and submit feedback to improve performance and usability.
- **AI PDF Accessibility Tool**
 - A new tool is in the pilot phase, which is designed to improve PDF accessibility compliance.
 - It will scan PDFs, generate accessibility reports, and automatically remediate issues.
 - Submit a service ticket to use the tool.
 - The tool is currently being tested in collaboration with faculty and IT.
- **AI Tools and Training**
 - MU IT offers multiple AI tools for campus use.
 - Faculty and staff should explore integration into daily work.
 - Training and engagement led by Jimil Vineyard
- **Annual Technology Survey Results**
 - The outcome of the recently completed annual technology survey report shows that metrics are trending upward over the past three years. This indicates improvement in technology services, user experience, and IT initiatives.

Minutes

- The April 16th, 2026 minutes were approved as written.

Heather Smith – ACCE Report

- Heather noted the meeting was lengthy but had limited actionable updates to bring forward.
- Much of the discussion focused on external updates and internal ACCE matters.
- **HEPC Update**
 - Dr. Adam Yates was recently appointed Vice Chancellor of Human Resources at HEPC. He has been in the role for approximately 3-4 months and presented updates at the last two ACCE meetings.
 - Dr. Yates is working on reorganizing the HEPC HR office, making potential changes to classification structures and compensation processes across the state system.
 - HEPC guidance does not always directly apply to Marshall and WVU, but it still provides valuable guidance and direction as well as potential insights for institutional improvements.
- **Legislative Update**
 - During the recent legislative sessions, no progress was made on restoring voting rights for staff, faculty and student Board of Governors representatives.
 - This will remain an ongoing priority.

Classified Staff Council Committees

- **Elections/Communications Committee – Nina Barrett** – No report.
- **Legislative Committee – Larry Morris**
 - Primary elections just ended the week before.
 - We should keep an eye out for the legislation on data centers, where they will be put, and how it could affect higher education.
- **Personnel/Finance Committee – Becky Lusher** – No report.
- **Physical Environment Committee – Becky Lusher** – No report..
- **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

Adams, Diana	Crawford, Dean	Longoria, Jacob	Pyles, Cora
Adkins, Jason	Daniels, Tiffani	Lucas, Taylor	Quodala, Leslie
Adkins, Ryan	Davis, Sarah	Lupashunski, Spencer	Ransbottom, Lisa
Agnello, Tricia	Dean, Benjamin	Lusher, Becky	Reeves, Emily
Akagbue, Bertha	Decker, Kaleigh	Lusher, Bryce	Rexroad, Elizabeth
Allen, Mike	Dingess, Kimberly	Mannan, Bindu	Rhodes, Jessica
Anders, Brandi	Dorado, Bob	Marcum, Darian	Risch, Christine
Atkins, Christopher	Dragovich, Isabella	Martin, Madison	Roberts, Alice
Bailey, Bonnie	Dunbar, Shaylen	Martin, Nick	Rodkey, Sarah
Bailey, Cara	Edmonds, Ashley	Maynard, Becky	Rose, Angie
Bailey, Jessica	Edmonds, Travis	Maynard, Kevin	Ross, Jerry
Bailey, Travis	Elliott, Chloe	McComas, Karen	Rowe, Kandice
Baldwin, Jesse	Ellison, Marc	McDade, Michael	Rowe, Philip
Ball, Tricia	Eskins, Katrina	McDavid, Cristina	Russell, Megan
Bibbee, Mistie	Fain, Cicero	McDavid, Sherry	Saunders, Amy
Bird, Hannah	Felder, Bruce	McGhee, Otesha	Saxton, Caleb
Bond, Cassi	Fischer, Karen	McKenna, Char	Schray, Kateryna
Bookwalter, Robert	Fry, Austin	McKinley, Garnet	Sharp, Tyler
Booth, Jim	Gallaher, Melanie	Means, Amanda	Sims, Kristin
Booth, Sharon	Gates, Lisa	Meddings, Teresa	Slate, Nick
Bowen, John	Gooding, Grace	Meek, Rebecca	Smith, Brad
Boyce, Charlotte	Hall, Cody	Metcalf, Larry	Smith, Heather
Brannock, Kathy	Hanrahan, Elizabeth	Midkiff, Glen	Smith, Tracy
Brown, Gabe	Harrold, Lisa	Midkiff, Susan	Smith-Holmes, Demeley
Brown, Hannah	Hendrick, Ashley	Mills, Cassandra	Sowards, Kelly
Brown, Jennifer	Henshaw, Kit	Mirzakhani, Amad	Spradlin, Wes
Buchanan, Amy	Hill, Michael	Morgan, Brian	Stafford, Robyn
Burgess, Brent	Himes, Eric	Morgan, Jennifer	Taylor, John
Burgess, Mary	Holmes, Linda	Morris, Larry	Taylor, Robin
Burriss, Butch	Jacobs, Brandi	Mummert, Carl	Thomas, Kim
Bush, Jesseka	Jarrell, Jimmy	Murphy, Katherine	Tidd, Matt
Byrd, Kevin	Jones, Angela	Murray, Heather	Ulrich, Sarah
Call, Cody	Keefer, Morgan	Nance, Jonathan	Vineyard, Jimil
Canterbury, Thomas	Kennedy, Paige	Nancy Floyd	Walker, Bob
Cantrell-Johnson, Sonja	King, Erin	Neace, Becky	Wallace, Troy
Carey, Allison	LaFon, Erin	O'Neill, Carleen	Weaver, Amy
Chaffin, Christie	Lambert, Scott	Painter, Ginny	West, Lance
Chaffin, Perry	Langer, Jonathan	Partridge, Karen	West-McCombs, Traci
Childers, David	Lapole, Christopher	Patel, Jyotsna	Wheeler, Michelle
Clark, Jackie	Lauhon, Cheyenne	Penrod, Jodie	White, Caitlin
Clark, Ralph	Layne, Mary	Perdue, Dee Dee	Wiley, Denise
Collins, Tabby	Lester, Amy	Persinger, Daniel	Williams, Allen
Contreras, Kassandra	Levering, Susan	Powell, Tina	Woods, Cameron
Counts, Katie	Lewis, Olivia	Puckett, Tabby	Workman, Missy
			Young, Howard
			Young, Miriah