

2018 Consulting Report

SUBMITTED BY

Dr. Ellen Chaffee, AGB Senior Consultant

Dr. Alvin Schexnider, AGB Senior Consultant

PREPARED FOR

Bluefield State College

DATE

August 13, 2018

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
I. BLUEFIELD STATE/BLEFIELD COMMUNITY AS OF THE JUNE 2018 REVIEW	4
JUNE OBSERVATIONS	4
JUNE RECOMMENDATIONS	4
<i>Accountability</i>	5
<i>Transparency</i>	5
<i>Communication</i>	5
<i>Bluefield State Strategy</i>	6
<i>Bluefield State Management and Infrastructure</i>	6
II. BLUEFIELD STATE/BLEFIELD AS OF THE AUGUST 2018 PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP	7
AUGUST OBSERVATIONS	7
AUGUST RECOMMENDATIONS	8
III. ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COLLEGE	9
ACCOUNTABILITY	9
CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETINGS	9
BOARD RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOARD DEVELOPMENT	10
TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION	11
INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT, ALUMNI, AND COMMUNICATIONS	12
STRATEGY	12
MANAGEMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE	13
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACCOUNTABILITY	13
APPENDIX	15
LIST OF ALL RECOMMENDATIONS	15
ATTACHMENT 1: MAY 29, 2018 NEWS STORY	18
ATTACHMENT 2: CONSULTANTS' SCHEDULE, JUNE 20-21, 2018	26
ATTACHMENT 3: JUNE 22, 2018 NEWS STORY	28
ATTACHMENT 4: IMPROVING BOARD MEETING BEHAVIOR	30

Introduction

In early June 2018, Chancellor Paul Hill of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) joined Bluefield State College Board Chair Bob Perkinson and President Marsha Krotseng in requesting an assessment of conditions at the college, prompted by the publication of a highly critical story in the local newspaper on May 29, 2018 (see attachment 1).

The three leaders engaged the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) to conduct an assessment that would help “strengthen board and presidential leadership and the relationship between the college, city, and community leaders, with the goal of supporting the future success of the college.” The authors of this report, Ellen Chaffee and Alvin Schexnider, conducted the assessment on behalf of AGB.

The initial visit was timed to coincide with the June 21, 2018 Board of Governors meeting, which was the first meeting following publication of the news story. Over the course of two days, we interviewed a number of college and community representatives and observed a meeting of the Board of Governors.

We prepared a draft report immediately after the visit, advocating a strong college-community partnership and proactive shared leadership for growth. State-level events appeared to threaten the feasibility of such an approach due to uncertainty and potentially unfavorable decisions to come. In consultation with Chair Perkinson and President Krotseng, we recommended holding a two-day partnership workshop as quickly as possible to permit college and community leaders to develop their relationships and chart their desired joint response and path forward.

This report provides (1) observations and recommendations from the initial June 20-21, 2018 interviews in Bluefield, (2) observations and recommendations from the August 3-4, 2018 college-community partnership workshop, and (3) additional observations and recommendations for Bluefield State College leaders. The Appendix lists all of the recommendations in the report.

I. BLUEFIELD STATE/BLEFIELD COMMUNITY AS OF THE JUNE 2018 REVIEW

On June 21-22, 2018, we met in individual or two-person interviews with seven (7) members of the Board of Governors, ten (10) community and civic leaders, and the President of Bluefield State. We also met in group settings with approximately 15 members of the alumni association and approximately 30 faculty members, 40 staff members, 12 students, and most members of the President's Cabinet. Attachment 2 presents our interview schedule for June 20-21, 2018. Attachment 3 presents the news story about the June 21, 2018 Board of Governors meeting.

We developed the observations and recommendations in this section immediately after the June visit, before the state-level events recounted above.

June Observations

- The situation is extremely complex with deep historical roots. Both the college and the community are fragile. Neither will thrive and both could fail unless the community and college build strong relationships and work together.
- Key themes that emerged from our interviews center around accountability, communications and transparency. Strategy and management issues also need attention.
- The college appears to have significant gaps in equipment, systems, and staff that make communication and decision-making difficult.
- The college has been unable or unaware of how to develop meaningful connections to the community's elected and business leadership in order to forge mutually beneficial relationships.
- City, community, and business leaders have very little understanding of the challenges and constraints facing the college or how higher education works.
- It appears that city, community, and business leaders are prepared to and capable of underwriting BSC's success, both financially and strategically.
- Long-term success for BSC and the community is possible if community and college leaders are able to establish a shared vision of the desired future for the community and college, shared understanding of their respective and joint circumstances, respectful joint problem-solving skills, and effective communication patterns. The potential for success is real and merits investment by all parties.

June Recommendations

Given the conclusion that only a strong, proactive college-community partnership has the potential to place either of the entities on a path to growth, the primary task in the short term

is to establish a leadership commitment to college-community partnership and begin to build trusting relationships and shared vision.

The first pre-requisite to a positive outcome is willingness on all sides to appreciate each other's strengths, respect each other, and let bygones be bygones. The second is willingness on all sides to make creating and sustaining a successful college-community partnership their top priority. We do not underestimate the amount of emotional maturity and patience these will require. The dominant themes requiring additional or corrective attention are accountability, transparency, communication, strategy, and management.

Accountability

- Ask the Governor to fill all vacancies on the Board of Governors ASAP with members capable of exemplary intentional leadership. No meaningful progress can occur without long-term board members who are committed to the work.
- Require the highest levels of governance education and practice from the board and each member.
- Secure specific, solid commitments from both sides for collaboration between the college and the community. Develop a written compact between college and community to establish roles, expectations, and activities/processes to achieve long-term mutual benefit.
- Develop specific, realistic outcome expectations for the president and establish a campus culture of support with accountability.
- Focus all general communication on strengths and appreciation, while focusing leadership attention on constructive problem-solving based on strategic priorities.

Transparency

- Clarify Bluefield State's role in the HEPC ten-year plan.
- Clarify Bluefield State's role in the city's ten-year plan.
- Make all key Bluefield State information readily available to campus and community personnel.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the founding of Bluefield State College as an Historically Black College (HBCU) and its contributions to higher education in the state and the nation. Develop strategies for the college and community to build on the enormous legacy for which it continues to receive federally-designated funding.

Communication

- Convene a summit of Bluefield State's stakeholders including alumni to begin a plan of institutional recovery.
- Establish a systematic, enduring and mutually beneficial communication and information-sharing process between community leaders and college leaders.

- Seek a community development grant to underwrite partnership development and community/college joint planning, including city developments that will help attract students.

Bluefield State Strategy

- With objective expertise, review the college's strategic position and opportunities, resolve existing differences (such as student residence needs), and identify the most effective and promising paths forward.
- When ready, begin an inclusive college strategic planning process that effectively engages community leaders and is mutually supportive with city plans.

Bluefield State Management and Infrastructure

- Review and improve deployment of institutional personnel to match each area's workforce needs.
- Identify and implement best practices in strategic human resource administration.
- Identify and remove the barriers to senior leadership recruitment and retention.
- Review and make essential improvements in the data, information, communication, and technology infrastructures.
- Create an expert advancement/development function to enhance philanthropy from individuals, foundations, and other sources.

II. BLUEFIELD STATE/BLEFIELD AS OF THE AUGUST 2018 PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP

Leaders of Bluefield State College and the Bluefield community agreed to meet for the general purposes of seeking shared perspective and consensus on partnership opportunities to address current conditions affecting both entities. Conditions included:

- Declining demographic and economic trends in the region
- Declining state support for the college
- A state-level report from NCHEMS that proposes major restructuring for public higher education in West Virginia, including potential mergers of institutions
- The Governor's creation of a short-term Blue-Ribbon Commission on higher education
- The abrupt change of Chancellors in the midst of a search for his successor and installation of an interim
- A local public statement of dissatisfaction with the governance and leadership of the college

On August 3-4, 2018, 16 college and community leaders met in Bluefield for a partnership workshop facilitated by AGB consultants Schexnider and Chaffee.

Community and college leaders agreed that the future of the college and the community are completely intertwined – both must succeed, and they need each other to do so. Every participant expressed deep commitment to work together for a positive future.

They agreed to continue meeting quarterly to oversee and guide collaborative action steps, with a steering committee meeting monthly for implementation. A number of immediate action steps were identified, focusing extensively on positive communication and engaging more and more people beyond their respective silos. Aligning college programs with area business and economic development opportunities is also a priority.

August Observations

The workshop appeared to be an unqualified success in building a bridge among city, business, college, and governing board leaders. Discussion was candid and productive. A deep, unwavering commitment among all to the success of Bluefield State College in collaboration with community leaders was evident throughout their considerable time together. The simple fact that so many leaders set aside everything else they could have been doing on a beautiful summer weekend is testament to that.

The proof, of course, is in the doing. Their strategic, communications, demographic, political, and resource challenges are more than enough to test the ability to carry forward as everyone sincerely intends. In fact, the challenges are easily great enough to overwhelm those intentions.

Everyone knows full well that “we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.” Change is essential and difficult. It is much easier to see and expect change in others than in oneself. Mistakes and occasional failures are inevitable.

The challenge is great; the stakes are the highest; the commitment is deep; and the participants bring all manner of wisdom and energy to the table. This can be done.

August Recommendations

- Participants know what they need to do, and they have begun to develop a collaborative, respectful culture of mutual understanding, action, and accountability. The plan for quarterly leadership meetings, monthly steering committee meetings, and more regular communication between the college and community are an essential part of the plan. As long as they continue to keep the best interests of the college and community at the forefront, they have every opportunity to turn the tide.

III. ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE COLLEGE

Below are additional recommendations on the five themes of the engagement: accountability, transparency, communication, strategy, and management and infrastructure.

Accountability

Accountability starts at the top, with the Board of Governors.

Conducting Effective Board of Governors Meetings

The June 21, 2018 meeting of the Board of Governors revealed very significant concerns about the governance of Bluefield State College. Despite several governance improvement initiatives in recent years, the meeting included egregious instances of poor behavior and lack of direct and indirect leadership. The board must first conduct itself with appropriate decorum and engagement, and then make systematic progress toward fulfilling its fiduciary responsibilities effectively and professionally. Each board member shares responsibility for ensuring compliance with board policies and continuous improvement in board governance.

Our specific observations include:

1. More than one member criticized some aspect of the college without constructive purpose.
2. One member repeatedly interrupted the proceedings rather than address his concerns by working with the chair to plan a constructive approach.
3. Most members said nothing at all or very little. This deprives the board of their shared leadership and renders them unable to assume their share of the board's fiduciary responsibilities.
4. The atmosphere at the meeting was tense, defensive, and rushed.
5. A major report was cut to 15-20 minutes with little opportunity for discussion or follow-up planning.

In addition, we heard multiple reports of one or more board members speaking negatively about the college and the board, thereby violating their responsibility to serve as a public advocate and ambassador for the college.

Such incidents at the board meeting or reported in various interviews are potential violations of the following Board of Governors governance policies (Board Governance Policy Manual, adopted October 2016):

Policy 101 j. Conduct the board's business in an exemplary fashion and with appropriate transparency, adhering to the highest ethical standards.

Policy 102 l. [regarding service as a public advocate and ambassador for the institution]

Policy 303 2. [regarding fiduciary responsibility of board members who are college personnel]

Policy 304 2. [regarding interactions between a governor and members of the college community]

Policy 305 [regarding proper expression of disagreement with board decisions and recourse]

Lack of conformance to board governance policy is not entirely surprising, given that the policy manual itself was drafted by a consultant who left numerous blanks and suggestions that were never addressed. It appears that the board simply adopted the consultant's draft without reading it.

Recommendations:

1. To provide a constructive environment for conducting its business, the board should collaboratively develop and enforce rules of conduct for its meetings – see “Aligning Governors’ Behavior with Good Practice,” attachment 4. This is the urgent top priority.
2. To set the foundation for more responsible governance, the board should take time during its next meeting to review and discuss its own policy manual, noting the topics covered and the places where further development is needed. Substantive discussion should focus on topics that are of most immediate benefit for the work at hand. Dedicate time to make needed changes (e.g. at least 15 minutes of reviewing, discussing, and revising a relevant portion of the bylaws or policy manual at every meeting for at least two years, or until accomplished).

Board Responsibility for Board Development

As of this writing, 25% of the members have yet to attend their first meeting, and that number could rise to about 40% shortly. Continuing members, especially those with only one or two years on the board, have experienced poor governance practices. The board's culture is ineffective and sometimes toxic. This is not a time to “figure it out as we go.”

On the positive side, the board is perfectly situated to work together to systematically create effective ways of doing business by learning best practices and making the necessary changes to put them in place. The college cannot be better than its board.

Governing boards are accountable almost exclusively to themselves. Bearing in mind that the president reports to the board, any attempts by the president to direct or correct board

behavior is inappropriate and entails significant professional risk. Any malfunctions are the board's responsibility.

The highest and most immediate priority after addressing behavior issues is for board members to take time to learn how to be a high-functioning board. These issues are closely related. Board education is a continuous process for all good boards. Extra effort and investment are crucial for this board at this time. Both the board and the institution are in peril. Investing considerable time to improve the board may feel less productive than focusing on the college itself, but it is analogous to putting your own oxygen mask on first, before seeking to help others.

Recommendations:

1. Bluefield State College recently became a member of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). Many very useful board education materials are available free at AGB's website, AGB.org. Every member of the board should be receiving the AGB magazine, *Trusteeship*, which comes out bimonthly. Past issues of the magazine are available online.
2. AGB consultants offer customized board development workshops, which we highly recommend for this board. While individual learning is essential, a well-attended board workshop in Bluefield will allow everyone to discuss what kind of culture you aim to create and sustain together as well as learning helpful tools and strategies for your work.
3. AGB also offers webinars, many of them at no cost. For example, "Funding your Campus Master Plan" is coming up on August 21, and "Using Technology to Enhance Board Transparency and Engagement" is on August 22.
4. The annual National Conference on Trusteeship (April 14-15, 2019 in Orlando) offers cutting-edge programming and speakers with a very practical, applied orientation. It is especially valuable for the opportunity to compare notes with trustees from other institutions.
5. The WV Higher Education Policy Commission typically offers a workshop for college and university board members annually and usually addresses state policies and priorities as well as board best practices.

Transparency and Communication

The partnership workshop participants identified a number of communications recommendations that should carry forward into college plans. A comparable effort is needed to keep campus personnel informed and energized. Perhaps a faculty-staff task force could

develop recommendations regarding timing, medium, and content for enhanced one-way and two-way communication among departments that breaks down silos, builds a sense of campus community, and helps engage campus and community personnel together.

Institutional Advancement, Alumni, and Communications

Many small colleges with very limited budgets find it difficult to invest in high-level staff for advancement (fund-raising), alumni relations, and communications. This is a false economy. Seasoned leaders in these areas are best positioned to make every penny count and make smart decisions about priorities that pay off in the end, even when resources are too scarce to provide them with adequate additional staff members in their area.

Recommendations:

- To adequately staff a communications partnership with the community, to engage more and younger alumni, and to secure philanthropic and other financial resources, Bluefield State needs to ensure that its leading staff members in these areas are qualified professionals with strong experience in their respective fields.
- To improve fund-raising capability and accountability, the advancement officer should be expected to review and make recommendations regarding the structure of the college foundation, its board, and the advancement officer's reporting/accountability relationships.
- African American alumni, many of them older, have a strong connection to the heritage of Bluefield State as an HBCU. Efforts to engage them in the life of the college today could build a stronger future and improve the campus climate for people of all races. Addressing issues of inclusivity needs to be part of the college's communications strategy.

Strategy

Bluefield State College Strategic Plan

It is time for the college's strategic plan to be updated or replaced. The president has extensive experience and academic expertise in higher education strategic planning. Engaging in a strategic planning process that includes community leaders and addresses mutually beneficial priorities could help each enterprise better understand the other and lead to a strong sense of shared vision.

Recommendation:

- To add depth, expertise, and confidence to the process, and to triage/pace the many improvements and initiatives on the path to success, the college and community should

consider beginning with a multi-faceted external strategy and management assessment as soon as possible. The assessment should include financial, technological, human resource, enrollment development, and advancement systems, identifying critical, urgent needs and suggesting affordable methods of addressing them. As an example of potential providers, please see [AGB Institutional Strategies](#). With so many new board members, this assessment will provide both governors and executive staff with objective information and recommendations on which they can collaboratively and confidently move forward quickly.

Management and Infrastructure

Campus Housing

The August partnership workshop participants did not make specific plans to address their fundamental differences regarding options for providing campus housing. Following up on this topic could be the leadership council's next major conversation. Focusing on the best interests of college and community, advancing BSC's success, and strategic facts could be helpful. For example:

- Are college and community leaders in sync regarding the desired future of the college and its plans to achieve that future? Has the college shared sufficient information and data with community leaders so that they, too, can envision the future with confidence? This should include environmental/strategic actors such as student expectations, key competitors, demographics, and infrastructure for successful recruiting and retention. People in other industries are often surprised by the complexity of strategic decisions in higher education.
- What are the strategic enrollment growth goals, and what kinds of housing options are needed to successfully recruit the projected market segments (e.g., online, local, imported from outside commuting distance, international, student-athletes)?

Recommendations:

1. Create a college-community task force to provide a data-based strategic assessment of the housing needs of the college with recommendations for action.

Administrative Responsibility for Accountability

It seems that portions of the institution are not performing to appropriate expectations. That is, individuals and functions can be slow to respond or are not producing reasonably required results. The potential causes for such situations can include unclear expectations, lack of essential tools or other resources, insufficient staff levels, staff turnover, inadequate knowledge

or expertise, and lack of motivation. To the extent that this impression is valid, it would be another critical urgent priority to address.

In addition, it seems that grievances and bullying are significant issues on the campus, to the point that it may be wise to hire a qualified Human Resources firm to assess and advise on appropriate remedies. Grievances are extremely expensive in dollars and time, and bullying prevents individuals from working together to solve problems in their own areas and from reporting them to authorities. Although it appears that few are involved in this behavior, it can have wider effects if only in that they distract leadership attention from more productive work.

Recommendations:

1. Invest in a high-level objective review by a qualified party to assess qualifications, staffing distributions, Human Resources infrastructure, common practices, and back-office technologies to diagnose the nature and extent of problems with administrative accountability. Respond accordingly. Note that this could be accomplished as part of the suggested strategy and management assessment proposed elsewhere, if undertaken.
2. Consider a board statement of principles for campus climate, inclusion, and civility, created with input from the faculty, administration, and students. See [Drake University](#). See also AGB's [statement](#) on the topic.

The board should recognize that the tone is set at the top and lead by example.

APPENDIX

List of All Recommendations

2018 Consulting Report for Bluefield State College

Dr. Ellen Chaffee and Dr. Alvin Schexnider, Senior Consultants
Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

For ease of review, below is a compiled list of recommendations in this report.

College-Community Collaboration

- Partnership workshop participants know what they need to do, and they have begun to develop a collaborative, respectful culture of mutual understanding, action, and accountability. As long as they continue to keep the best interests of the college and community at the forefront, they have every opportunity to turn the tide.

Accountability

- Ask the Governor to fill all vacancies on the Board of Governors ASAP with members capable of exemplary intentional leadership. No meaningful progress can occur without long-term board members who are committed to the work.
- Require the highest levels of governance education and practice from the board and each member.
- Secure specific, solid commitments from both sides for collaboration between the college and the community. Develop a written compact between college and community to establish roles, expectations, and activities/processes to achieve long-term mutual benefit. [launched, 8/4/18]
- Develop specific, realistic outcome expectations for the president and establish a campus culture of support with accountability
- Focus all general communication on strengths and appreciation, while focusing leadership attention on constructive problem-solving based on strategic priorities
- To provide a constructive environment for conducting its business, the board should collaboratively develop and enforce rules of conduct for its meetings – see “Aligning Governors’ Behavior with Good Practice,” attachment 4. This is the urgent top priority for the board.
- To set the foundation for more responsible governance, the board should take time during its next meeting to review and discuss its own policy manual, noting the topics covered and the places where further development is needed. Substantive discussion should focus on topics that are of most immediate benefit for the work at hand. At least 15 minutes of reviewing, discussing, and revising a relevant portion of the bylaws or policy manual should be a regular portion of every meeting for at least two years.
- Bluefield State College recently became a member of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). Many very useful board education materials are available free at AGB’s website, AGB.org. Every member of the board should be

receiving the AGB magazine, *Trusteeship*, which comes out bimonthly. Past issues of the magazine are available online.

- AGB consultants offer customized board development workshops, which we highly recommend for this board. While individual learning is essential, a well-attended board workshop in Bluefield will allow everyone to discuss what kind of culture you aim to create and sustain together as well as learning helpful tools and strategies for your work.
- AGB also offers webinars, many of them at no cost. For example, “Funding your Campus Master Plan” is coming up on August 21, and “Using Technology to Enhance Board Transparency and Engagement” is on August 22.
- The annual National Conference on Trusteeship (April 14-15, 2019 in Orlando) offers cutting-edge programming and speakers with a very practical, applied orientation. It is especially valuable for the opportunity to compare notes with trustees from other institutions.

Transparency

- Clarify Bluefield State’s role in the HEPC ten-year plan
- Clarify Bluefield State’s role in the city’s ten-year plan
- Make all key Bluefield State information readily available to campus and community personnel

Communication

- Convene a summit of Bluefield State’s stakeholders including alumni to begin a plan of institutional recovery and racial reconciliation. [overlaps with community-campus partnership recommendation]
- Establish a systematic, enduring and mutually beneficial communication and information-sharing process between community leaders and college leaders.
- Seek a community development grant to underwrite partnership development and community/college joint planning, including city developments that will help attract students.
- The partnership workshop participants identified a number of communications recommendations that should carry forward into college plans.
- To adequately staff a communications partnership with the community, to engage more and younger alumni, and to secure philanthropic and other financial resources, Bluefield State needs to ensure that its leading staff members in these areas are qualified professionals with strong experience in their respective fields.
- To improve fund-raising capability and accountability, the advancement officer should be expected to review and make recommendations regarding the structure of the college foundation, its board, and the advancement officer’s reporting/accountability relationships.

Bluefield State Strategy

- With objective expertise, review the college's strategic position and opportunities, resolve existing differences (such as student residence needs), and identify the most effective and promising paths forward.
- When ready, begin an inclusive college strategic planning process that effectively engages community leaders and is mutually supportive with city plans.
- To add depth, expertise, and confidence to the process, and to triage/pace the many improvements and initiatives on the path to success, the college and community should consider beginning with a multi-faceted external strategy and management assessment as soon as possible. The assessment should include financial, technological, human resource, enrollment development, and advancement systems, identifying critical, urgent needs and suggesting affordable methods of addressing them. As an example of potential providers, please see [AGB Institutional Strategies](#). With so many new board members, this assessment will provide both governors and executive staff with objective information and recommendations on which they can collaboratively and confidently move forward quickly.

Bluefield State Management and Infrastructure

- Review and improve deployment of institutional personnel to match each area's workforce needs.
- Identify and implement best practices in strategic human resource administration.
- Identify and remove the barriers to senior leadership recruitment and retention.
- Review and make essential improvements in the data, information, communication, and technology infrastructures.
- Create an expert advancement/development function.
- Create a college-community task force to provide a data-based strategic assessment of the housing needs of the college with recommendations for action.

Invest in a high-level objective review by a qualified objective party to assess qualifications, staffing distributions, Human Resources infrastructure, common practices, and back-office technologies to diagnose the nature and extent of problems with administrative accountability. Respond accordingly. Note that this could be accomplished as part of the suggested strategy and management assessment proposed else

Attachment 1: May 29, 2018 News Story

http://www.bdtonline.com/news/bsc-president-under-fire-bluefield-city-officials-seek-ouster-of/article_51eb3aa2-62ee-11e8-a023-cb93322a12e7.html

BSC president under fire: Bluefield city officials seek ouster of Krotseng

By CHARLIE BOOTHE Bluefield Daily Telegraph - May 29, 2018

BLUEFIELD — With a sharp decrease in enrollment at Bluefield State College in recent years and other issues, city officials as well as some area businessmen are seeking a change of direction at the historic college as well as a change of leadership.

“The city recommends Dr. (Marsha) Krotseng (BSC president) step down and new leadership be installed,” a statement from the City of Bluefield said. “The board of governors needs a complete overhaul of its membership to bring fresh ideas, actionable ideas and proper oversight to a newly formed administration.”

Dane Rideout, city manager, said the progressive decline in enrollment “far exceeds what other colleges in the area are experiencing. BSC leads the state in decline at 30.9 percent for the 2012-2016 time period.”

According to the West Virginia Higher Education Report Card for 2017, Bluefield State’s enrollment fell from 1,951 in 2012 to 1,349 in 2016, an almost 31 percent drop. A slight increase was seen in 2017, though, with 1,379.

Concord University’s enrollment dropped from 2,839 in 2012 to 2,429 in 2016.

Statewide, student enrollment at all colleges and universities fell from 68,430 in 2012 to 64,994 in 2016.

Rideout said the college’s recruitment efforts have been “flawed,” with more concentration on trying to market the college in large cities “when we have a weak recruiting and marketing campaign within 100 miles of the school.”

The drop in enrollment at the College of Business has been particularly sharp, dropping almost 40 percent since 2012, from 214 to 136.

That does not sit well with local businessmen, brothers Bill, Tom and Charlie Cole. The business college is named in honor of their father, W. Paul Cole Jr.

The Cole brothers issued the following statement:

“My brothers and I are very unhappy that the School of Business that bears our father’s name is going down the drain. We along with the Shott Foundation made a substantial donation to honor our father’s legacy. We are concerned about the lack of leadership at the college. We have pressed both Bob Perkinson (chair of the college’s board of governors) and Krotseng to resign before it’s too late. Our city can ill afford to lose another large employer. Both have resisted our efforts arguing that they are doing a good job.”

Several faculty members have expressed no confidence in support of the administration, they said, adding that “there are many great faculty administration doing yeoman’s duty but they are getting absolutely no support from leadership.”

“It appears that the chairman of the Board of Governors and the president of the college are intent on business as usual,” the statement said. “With all the pressure on funding at state level, it could be only a matter of time before the rug gets pulled from underneath BSC, unless swift and decisive action is taken to correct the declining enrollment.”

“If you want to close down a historical black college, then we are doing that based on the leadership hat has been demonstrated by the president and the board of governors,” Rideout said. “We are extremely concerned because they are our number two employer inside our city. It’s not only jobs, it’s also a driver of culture and quality of life.”

They are also concerned about the possibility of the state taking a harder look at underperforming colleges as budgets have continued to be tightened.

Del. John Shott, R-Mercer County, is also concerned about the political side of the situation.

“Bluefield State College is critically important to this county, and especially to the city of Bluefield,” he said. “In the past, there has been political pressure in Charleston to close one of the county’s colleges or to consolidate them. In view of the budget shortages of past years, that pressure still exists.”

But Perkinson said recruitment has become tougher as the area’s and state’s population has declined and funding from the state has been cut.

“They haven’t read the demographics of the community,” he said. “If they want it to be part of the community it (BSC) has to be efficient and survive, and the only way to do that is to attract out of the area. You can’t recruit students who are not here.”

Perkinson said it’s a matter of understanding the nature of higher education and how difficult it is to recruit and how these methods have evolved.

The pool of potential students in the region has declined along with the economy, he said, and BSC is reacting to it.

Mercer County public school enrollment dropped from 9,657 in 2011-12 to 8,960 for the current school year.

Krotseng, who was recently given a two-year contract extension, said the college has been guided in recruiting efforts by professional organizations, including a master plan for the college that was completed in 2014 by Paulen & Associates, a higher education facilities planner, and Thompson & Litton, an architectural firm.

That master plan said “loud and clear” that the demographics are shrinking in southern West Virginia, she said. “We have to expand our recruitment efforts. We do a good job recruiting in local high schools.”

Krotseng said 87 percent of BSC students are from southern West Virginia.

However, Rideout as well as city board member Robb Williams, who is CEO of HealthSouth, said specific programs at BSC, like the business school and the school of nursing, should be doing better because they train for jobs that are available.

Williams said the nursing program is “a good one with good people. But I wonder why the program itself has not grown.”

Deborah Halsey-Hunter, who is a business professor at BSC and is now interim head of the school of business, said the numbers should be better and she has not been pleased with the college’s recruiting efforts.

“We have to look at the overall recruiting,” she said. “We only had 10 freshmen (this year) from Tazewell County. That is sad.”

Halsey-Hunter said recruiting in larger cities has not brought in students to the business program.

She also said BSC needs to do a better job in articulation agreements with area community colleges, pointing out Wytheville and Southwest Virginia community colleges in particular.

“No recruiting has been done there,” she said. “You have to talk with students, have a presence on their campuses.”

Jim Schlimmer, director of admissions and enrollment services at BSC, said some of these issues are being addressed and the college is following “best practices” for recruiting, including recruitment fairs at high schools, orientation programs, followups on student inquiries and participation in “student name buys.”

“Since 2016, BSC has increased our college fair participation in West Virginia, Virginia, and neighboring states,” he said. “In total, we covered over 200 college fairs and collected inquiries from over 1,800 senior and juniors. For the 2017 recruitment year, we received 106 applications from college fairs, 68 applications and enrolled 28 students (For 2016, we enrolled one student from college fair inquiries).”

Schlimmer said the college is also working with CAPPEX, a college scholarship and search service.

In 2014, we began a relationship with CAPPEX – a national college admissions group that provides student inquiries to colleges via a sophisticated social media platform,” he said. “Over a two-year period, BSC acquired approximately 2,000 inquiries through this source. For the past two years, we enrolled four and three students, respectively, from this source. For the 2018 recruitment year, we are still working with CAPPEX in support of our first-year recruitment needs.”

The name buys us a new tool, he said, and it’s paying off.

“For the 2017 school year, we received 145 applications, offered admission to 68 students and enrolled 39 students from this activity – compared with enrolling zero in prior years,” he said. “The investment for this function was approximately \$3,600 for the names and \$7,000 for supporting services or \$10,600 total. The one-year tuition revenue attributed to search investment was \$262,392 (39 students time \$6,728). Even with the allowance for the investment of \$10,600, the net one-year return was approximately \$252,000.”

Both Krotseng and Perkinson said one fundamental roadblock to recruiting has been the lack of an on-campus dormitory, but that is another issue that has city leaders concerned.

Rideout, who has the support of the mayor and board of directors, said spending \$18 million for a dormitory for 136 students and \$10 million for a parking garage is not feasible.

“The BSC parking problem is due to the lack of cars on campus,” he said. “The debt repayment alone on a \$28 million dollar facility is over \$1 million a year of which the school has not demonstrated to the federal government their ability to repay. This is truly a ‘build it and they will come ... and we still can’t afford the loan payment’ strategy.”

Rideout said Concord University “can’t fill its dorms,” and a better strategy would be for the college to work with the city and other partners to act on alternative housing options “that fit into the budget and provide more than 136 dorm spaces.”

But Krotseng said studies show that prospective students want to have on-campus housing in order to have a traditional college experience.

“This is an idea, a recommendation that came out of our master plan,” she said. “We have had a number of open meetings with faculty, staff, students, alumni and people from the community. We are not just talking about a residence hall, we are talking about transforming a campus, the importance of having students on campus.”

In April 2017, the Shott Foundation pledged a grant of \$1.5 million to go toward the dorm with BSC required to raise \$500,000. As of January, however, less than \$200,000 had been raised, but Krotseng said a major announcement about a donation will be made soon.

A preliminary loan application with the USDA (U.S. Department of Agriculture) for the dorm was submitted in August 2017.

But Rideout maintains the college “simply can’t afford it.”

Currently, some student housing for Bluefield State is available at MountainView Student Residence and Conference Center — a converted former Holiday Inn — which is located several miles off campus on Cumberland Road in Bluefield.

But Rideout said that has presented some problems.

“The city had to get involved with it because it was not compliant with code,” he said. “They were renting to anybody that would pay them money.”

The facility had “serious electrical and safety issues,” he said, but there have been some improvements.

The master plan also suggested the college consider using Tiffany Manor Apartments, a nearby 142-unit affordable housing project owned and managed by the Bluefield Housing Authority, which Rideout was referring to as an alternative housing option.

The city has approached the college about purchasing the property. The master plan said it could be used for married students, international students, honors students, as well as faculty and staff, but not for first-year students because of its apartment style layout.

“That proposal was presented to them,” Rideout said, adding that Tiffany Manor can be “retooled” to meet the college’s needs.

Perkinson reiterated what Krotseng said.

“Students are looking for a campus experience,” he said, emphasizing the point a dorm (three of them in the long term) is part of the master plan recommendations.

Krotseng said everyone wants to see BSC grow.

“The bottom line is, for that to happen we have to be able to attract students,” she said. “One way is to have a residence hall. Not having one makes you lose a major segment of the (student) population.”

Another issue that has surfaced is hiring practices, with complaints of too many people in “interim” positions at the college.

Even the college’s provost is interim, and to Jim Spencer, who works closely with Bluefield State as the city’s director of economic development, that’s a problem.

“Too many folks have the interim tag in key positions,” he said. “I think they have had about five provosts over the past 7 years or so. That is your academic CEO. When you have that much turnover in a key position, that is a major red flag.”

Rideout said one of the city’s recommendations is to “take a hard look at all of the interim staff that have been hired into influential positions and insure we have the most qualified and experienced individuals leading this organization.”

Krotseng said there are several interim positions and it is an issue that needs to be remedied.

“We are currently in the process of filling several positions,” she said. “We want to fill interim positions with the right people.”

Krotseng said another area the college is working on is improving online services, one of the complaints heard often.

Rideout said it’s a matter of having a staff that should embrace technology and providing that technology is the responsibility of leadership.

“It’s an archaic website” that should provide more online services, he said of the BSC website.

“We do have online courses,” Krotseng said, pointing out the college’s nursing program and business courses. “Some processes are not as automated as they should be yet.”

She said updates on technology are given to the board of governors in all their meetings.

“A number of initiatives are under way,” she said. “We are working toward it (updating all digital technology).”

Another concern from the city is the lack of alumni involvement.

“The alumni involvement, outreach and interaction is either nonexistent or a purely a social event focused around food,” Rideout said. “Fundraising is 80 percent of what a college

president should focus their time. We have failed miserably in this area and believe that contact via email or snail mail will entice donors to get involved with our college.”

“Direction for alumni affairs is one of the areas we are specifically working to strengthen,” Krotseng said. “I am spending an extraordinary amount of time doing that, given the multiple demands of a president’s time.”

Krotseng said she recently attended alumni receptions in Washington, D.C. and Roanoke. “We have not had those in recent years. Other staff are getting involved with that.”

Outreach should not just be in Bluefield, she said, and has to be expanded.

While the city pointed out problems, positive aspects of the college are also emphasized, including successful programs like robotics, “phenomenal engineering educational opportunities,” business and accounting, and select professors who have partnered with the city on projects like the Commercialization Station.

Recommendations from the city also include bringing in an outside organization that specializes in college operations to provide an assessment for newly installed leadership as well as a road map to recovery. Finding a retired, experienced college president to come in for a couple of years to oversee recovery has also been suggested.

All involved agree that whatever is needed to keep the college open and growing must be done, but the issue is how to get there.

“If there are things we need to do to improve, that’s what we need to do,” Krotseng said. “We all have the same goal. We want to see the college grow and thrive. Let’s look at what’s good for the college. That is the prime consideration.”

Krotseng said she plans to continue to work toward making the college better.

Perkinson, whose term on the board expires on June 30, said he was on the search committee that brought Krotseng here and it is “a very long and arduous task and it’s very expensive.”

“I am not telling you there are no issues,” he said.” But the crop (of potential presidents) that are willing to come here is not robust. You have to look at the leaders you have and ask, ‘Can I support this leader in a way that takes us where we want to go?’”

Perkinson said he does support Krotseng and this is not the time, especially with the economy and loss of population, to embark on a change in leadership.

Although the college has lost funding in state budget cutbacks and fees and grants associated with enrollment, it is cash solvent, he said, and urged people to be “silent and supportive” instead of stirring things up.

“I appreciate what has been said, but I haven’t seen them come forward and offer support either,” he said. “At the end of the day, if people are not very, very careful, Bluefield State College will not be here in 10 years.”

For Rideout and the city, it’s a leadership issue, and changes won’t matter as long as the same people are in charge.

“We don’t want to be looking in the rearview mirror wishing we would have done something,” Rideout said. “This is a leadership problem.”

Shott said he understands what a difficult job it is to lead a college, but the job has to be the right fit for the person.

“It is extremely challenging to be a college president, especially of a small West Virginia college,” he said. “It requires many talents and an exceptional personality to be both a successful fundraiser and a visionary, which is what most colleges need in today’s world.

“President Krotseng is a dedicated, intelligent and talented person,” Shott said. “However, the question has to be whether her personality and talents are a good fit for the job. It is unfortunate that she has lost the confidence of city leaders and so many others on the college’s staff and in the community. It’s not enough for the college to just survive day to day, it needs to thrive in order to insure its continued existence. Maintaining the ‘status quo’ won’t be good enough.

“Therefore, it is essential for the board of governors to quickly determine if the current leadership is what is needed for the college to meet the current challenges facing it and to act decisively and promptly after making that determination.”

Attachment 2: Consultants' Schedule, June 20-21, 2018

Schedule for Drs. Alvin Schexnider and Ellen Chaffee Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Bluefield State College, June 20-21, 2018

Date	Time	Participant	In person or by phone
Wednesday, June 20	9:00 am	Community leader	In person
	10:00 am	Nick Ameli	By phone
	10:30	Community/civic leader	In person
	12:30	President Krotseng	In person
	1:30 pm	Faculty – approximately 30 individuals	In person
	2:30 pm	Alumni – approximately 12 individuals plus three by conference phone	In person and by phone
	4:00 pm	Staff – approximately 30 individuals	In person
	5:00 pm	Board Vice Chairman Garry Moore	In person
	6:30 pm	Dinner with Board Chairman Perkinson and President Krotseng	In person
Thursday, June 21	8:00 am	Two community/civic leaders	In person
	9:00 am	Delegate John Shott	By phone
	10:00 am	Second staff option – approximately 10 individuals	In person
	10:30 am	Board member Norris Kantor, Esq.	In person
	11:00 am	President's Cabinet – approximately 8 individuals	In person
	12:00 pm	Students/Student Government – approximately 12 individuals	In person

	1:00 pm	Consultants confer	
	2:00 pm	Tom, Charlie, and Bill Cole	In person and by phone
	4:00 pm	Board member Dr. Norman Mirsky	In person
	4:30 pm	Board member Lois Manns	In person
	5:00 pm	Board member Bob Buzzo	In person
	5:30 pm	Board member Cathy Deeb	In person
	6:30 pm	Board of Governors Meeting	In person
Monday, June 25	8:30 am	City Manager Dane Rideout	By phone

Attachment 3: June 22, 2018 News Story

http://www.bdtonline.com/news/agency-to-report-on-bluefield-state-concerns/article_a29b8e8c-75c9-11e8-829c-e71cfa87ccbf.html

Agency to report on Bluefield State concerns

By CHARLIE BOOTHE Bluefield Daily Telegraph Jun 22, 2018

CHARLESTON — The Bluefield State College Board of Governors will be receiving a report from an agency that was on campus this week to look into concerns related to the college recently brought up by the community and the City of Bluefield.

At the board's Thursday night meeting, Dr. Alvin Schexnider and Dr. Ellen-Earle Chaffee, with AGB (Association of Governing Boards) of Washington D.C. told the board they spoke to people in the community and at the college.

"For two days we have listened to key stakeholders in the city as well as within the college," Schexnider said. "We are going to draft a report in about a month. It (the visit) has been very informative and I hope we can be of help."

"We are grateful for the insights ... and the suggestions," Chaffee said. "We have heard from a number of people. Our goal is to help the college and community to move forward together in a constructive way with a fresh perspective."

Bob Perkinson, president of the college's board of governors, said the board requested representatives of AGB spend time here to help ensure BSC is on the right track.

Issues of enrollment and leadership at the college recently surfaced as some local businessmen and city leaders called for the resignation of Dr. Marsha Krotseng, BSC president.

"We requested the firm come in," Perkinson said. "We have to have community support or we will not have a college."

Enrollment has fallen drastically in recent years. According to the West Virginia Higher Education Report Card for 2017, Bluefield State's enrollment fell from 1,951 in 2012 to 1,349 in 2016, an almost 31 percent drop, leading the state.

The drop in enrollment at the College of Business has been particularly sharp, dropping almost 40 percent since 2012, from 214 to 136.

Recruitment efforts were criticized as well as a "lack of leadership" at the college.

Shelli Dronsfield, director of communications of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, which is the overall governing authority of college boards, said earlier this week the firm works to make sure a college or university does not lose its accreditation.

"If it's higher education, it must be accredited," she said.

Dronsfield said the evaluation by AGB is made to try to give direction to the board of governors on what may need to be done to help the college and avoid any accreditation issues.

"It is fairly obvious we don't do everything correct," Perkinson said. "Any time we can, we will correct that and made our institution better so we can survive."

Schexnider and Chaffee will be back to the college during the drafting of the report, he added.

The board also heard a report regarding enrollment and recruitment efforts in a conference call with Craig Engel, senior vice president with Ruffalo Noel Levitz, an Iowa-based firm that

specializes in enrollment issues. Engel recently visited the campus and said this report builds on a previous study from 2014.

“What was really positive,” he said, “is it’s nice to see the institution has not been sitting still over the last four years. There are several things that have moved forward.”

Engel mentioned the development of the school’s master plan, a better recruiting effort, website improvements and an increase in retaining students from their freshmen to sophomore years.

Twenty-five recommendations were made by Engel, though, and Perkinson asked him to prioritize the top three.

Engel said the first is the reestablishment of an enrollment management committee to “identify problems and break down barriers to solve problems” with enrollment. One immediate issue raised by students, he said, is the college’s requirement to have documented immunizations as part of an application, calling it a “barrier to enrollment” and not necessary.

The committee could work on this issue as well as others, like allowing students to know the amount of their financial aid they will be awarded before registration so they will know how many classes they can afford to take. A committee could also help with the college’s organizational structure, communication and transparency, he added.

The second priority is the further enhancement of the college’s website. “It is the number one marketing tool,” he said.

Board member Daniel “Frosty” Frost agreed that the website needs work and has been described as “archaic.” Board member Norris Kantor asked what the cost would be to redesign it, but Engel could not give an exact figure.

The third priority, Engel said, is to revise the annual marketing and recruitment plan and create a student success plan, with clear goals and a plan to achieve those goals. Frost said the college already knows the information presented in the report as it has been discussed before. Engel said that it is “frustrating” to hear information that has already been presented and it is not “rocket science.”

Perkinson instructed the president’s office and staff to work on those three priorities to have a “clear plan” on achieving them at the board’s August meeting.

“I think that is reasonable,” he said.

“I will assure you and the board that we will come back to you at the next meeting with the plan and action steps,” Krotseng said.

Perkinson also announced that he and Kantor are serving their last term, which expires at the end of June.

However, he said Gov. Jim Justice, who will appoint replacements, has not yet done so and he and Kantor will continue to serve on the board until those appointments are made.

Perkinson was also elected to stay as chair until he is replaced and current vice chair Garry Moore was reelected to that position.

Attachment 4: IMPROVING BOARD MEETING BEHAVIORⁱ

Prepared by Dr. Ellen Chaffee for the Bluefield State College Board of Governors
July 2018

When one or more board members behave inappropriately, the chair, the governance committee, and each board member share responsibility for addressing the problem. In most cases, a private conversation with the board chair will take care of the matter. In a few cases, more proactive, purposeful, and sometimes public correction is required.

Two written documents can both prevent and help cure misbehavior: a board policy on expectations of individual trustees and a “rules of conduct” statement for board and committee meetings. They should be

- Relevant to this individual board
- Specific
- Respectful
- Written by board members and periodically revised
- Posted with meeting materials or at the meeting location
- Addressed to board members and guests (rules of conduct), with a section that pertains to guest participation in the meeting if allowed
- Enforced primarily by the chair

When misconduct is more than a rare incident, all parties should have a shared understanding of what constitutes misconduct that requires more than a private conversation or mild correction during the meeting and what the consequences may be.

SAMPLE: Dealing with Misconduct, Board of Trustees, XYZ University

The Board follows its agenda.

If a trustee raises an issue that is not on the agenda or peripheral to the agenda item at hand, the chair will first seek to redirect attention to the agenda item. If necessary, the chair will invite the trustee to make a motion to revise the agenda accordingly.

If the motion passes, the agenda is revised.

If the motion does not pass, the trustee may follow up with the chair or president outside the meeting in accordance with policy. The trustee may not raise the matter again at that meeting.

Every member of the Board is expected to participate constructively.

If a trustee speaks longer than five minutes, the chair may politely stop that speaker to allow others to speak or to allow the board to act.

If a trustee's comments are irrelevant, destructive, uncivil, or otherwise inappropriate, the chair will stop the speaker immediately and may select any appropriate level of intervention (see consequences section below) even if it is a first infraction.

Every member of the Board is expected to comply with Board policies and rules of conduct.

If a trustee violates a board policy or rules of conduct during a board meeting, the chair will stop the trustee, point out the violation, and tell the trustee to cease.

If a trustee believes that another trustee is violating policy or conduct rules during a board meeting and the chair does not act, the trustee is expected to call the apparent infraction to the attention of the chair.

Board policies and conduct rules apply to the chair and to ex officio members as well. A violation by the chair will be addressed by the vice chair.

The chair has a right to remove anyone who is not a member of the board from the meeting location at any time, subject to requirements of state open meeting laws.

SAMPLE: CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATING POLICY OR RULES OF CONDUCT DURING A BOARD MEETING

Progressive intervention for multiple violations within a single meeting:

First infraction – remind the trustee of the relevant policy or conduct rule and the need to take a different approach.

Second infraction – declare the trustee to be out of order. Move on to another speaker or the next agenda item.

Third infraction – declare the trustee to be out of order. Instruct the secretary to record the name of the offender, the nature of the offense, and the relevant words or behavior.

Fourth infraction – The chair will ask the board what penalty shall be assessed. Options include:

- A motion that the member must apologize
- A motion that the member must leave the hall during the remainder of the meeting
- A motion to censure the member

- A motion to suspend the member's rights for a designated period of time
- A motion to expel the member from the organization

Discipline within a 12-month period:

If a trustee is called out of order (second infraction or higher) at more than one meeting in any 12-month period, the chair will ask the board what penalty shall be assessed without waiting for a third or fourth offense at that meeting.

ⁱ Inspired and informed by <https://www.kidlink.org/docs/RobertRules/chap15.html>, accessed on July 14, 2018