

Board of Governors Meeting Minutes
Boyd Conference Room
Thursday, April 24, 2025, 4:00 PM

Members Present: Mr. Shannon Remines; Mr. Bill Cole; Mr. Randall Price; Mr. Ed Toman; Ms. Cathy Deeb; Mr. Anthony Tolley; Mrs. Rebecca Peterson; Mr. Michael Hastings; Mr. Jack Sheffler (Faculty Representative); Mr. Tim McKenzie (Staff Representative); Mr. Luke Roberts (Student Representative)

Members Absent: Mr. Charlie Cole, Chair

Guests: President Darrin Martin; Mr. Josh Grubb; Mr. Brent Benjamin; Dr. Sarita Rhonemus; Mr. Ryan Bailey; Mr. Ronald Shidemantle; Mr. Ansel Ponder; Ms. Julie Orr; Dr. Sudhakar Jamkhani; Dr. Amanda Matoushek; Dr. Darrel Malamisura; Dr. Andrew Vance; Rev. Garry Moore, Sr.; Dr. Bill Bennett; Ms. Vanessa Godfrey; Ms. Christina Sammarco; Ms. Cynthia Higgins-Atwell; Dr. Dierdre Guyton; Dr. David McMillan-Virtual; Ms. Sherri Williams-Virtual; Dr. Angela Lambert-Virtual; Mr. Earl Lee, Jr.; Mrs. Olarotimi Ponder-Virtual; Ms. Felicia Oakes-Virtual.

1. Call to Order and Chair Remarks

Vice-Chair Remines called the meeting to order. He congratulated Bluefield State's golf team for winning the CIAA Conference Championship. He also celebrated successes with local recruitment, LPN to RN program rankings, the business competition team, and renewed momentum for the Mining Engineering program.

Vice-Chair Remines also discussed House Bill 3279, noting that if signed into law, faculty, staff, and student representatives would lose their voting rights on the Board, but emphasized that shared governance remains a strong value at Bluefield State.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the March meeting were reviewed. No changes were noted. A motion to approve was made by Mr. B. Cole, seconded by Mr. Hastings, and passed unanimously.

3. President's Report – Dr. Martin

- **HLC Focus Visit:** Completed, with positive informal feedback. Formal results expected by July.
- **Provost Appointment:** Dr. Rhonemus was officially appointed as Provost as of April 17, 2025.
- **Athletic Director Search:** Finalists are visiting campus; announcement expected in May.

- **Men's Basketball:** A coaching search is underway following the coach's departure.
- **Earth Day Events:** Thanked faculty, staff, and students for participation in campus beautification efforts.
- **Cafeteria Update:** Plans to reintroduce food service with limited options (sandwiches, salads) in Fall 2025.
- **Commencement:** Scheduled for May 17, 2025, at 10:00 AM at the Brushfork Armory; Marvin Woody will be the speaker.
- **Faculty and Staff Appreciation Luncheon:** Scheduled for April 30, 2025. The Board of Governors was invited to attend.
- **Valedictorian & Salutatorian Reception:** Scheduled for May 14, 2025. The Board of Governors was invited to attend.
- **Executive Order on HBCUs:** Announced new federal support initiatives for HBCUs.

4. Standing Reports

Academic Update – Dr. Rhonemus

- Awaiting draft report from HLC visit team.
- Nursing Associate Degree Program reviewed and approved for continuation.
 - Motion to approve made by Mr. B. Cole, seconded by Mr. Tolley, and carried unanimously.
- New course “Foundational Skills for the 21st Century” will launch in Fall 2025.
- Discussed opportunities for board members to visit BSU colleges. Dr. Rhonemus will share schedule with board via email.

Finance and Budget – Ms. Higgins-Atwell

- Student account receivables have improved, with \$41,000 collected in 10 days.
- 44% of outstanding student debt is owed by athletes.
 - Mr. Sheffler asked how much revenue is generated by student-athletes. Ms. Higgins-Atwell said she would follow up with that information. Mr. Bailey reported overall athletics revenue. **Follow Up**
- Deferred maintenance project approved: Roofing project at MEC (\$31,000).
 - The Board of Governors approved the Resolution Authorizing Application for the State Institutions of Higher Education Deferred Maintenance Grant for use toward the MEC Roofing Project.
 - Motion to approve by Mr. Tolley, seconded by Mr. Hastings, and unanimously carried.

Safety and Security – EVP Benjamin

- Security improvements continue with the new vendor.
- Plans underway to create evacuation plans for all buildings. **Follow Up**
- Housekeeping transition to Topnotch appears successful.
- Students may begin ticketing program as part of criminal justice curriculum.

- Mr. Sheffler asked about fire drills on campus. It was reported that these would follow the approved evacuation plans.
- Mr. Roberts asked if security officers could use university vehicles instead of their own. Mr. Benjamin confirmed that the use of their own vehicles was part of the contract negotiation.

Enrollment Update – Mr. Shidemantle

- Enrollment up 7.1% over the same time last year.
- Fall 2025 applications are up 3.24%; transfers up 17.5%.
- Successful Mercer County Days and outreach efforts highlighted.
- Mr. Toman asked if seniors from Mercer County Schools received any BSU merchandise. President Martin confirmed that students who attend Mercer County Schools Days will receive BSU gear.
- Vice-Chair Remines and President Martin expressed appreciation for the efforts being made by enrollment team.

Faculty Representative Updates – Dr. Sheffler

- Discussion on continued development of Honors Housing.

Staff Representative Updates – Mr. McKenzie

- Staff Council elections completed; six new members will start July 1.

Student Representative Updates – Mr. Roberts

- Mr. Roberts re-elected as SGA President.
- Successful campus beautification and cleanup day.
- Planned attendance at a statewide SGA leadership conference.
- Announced creation of a new student food pantry supported by Food Lion.

Chancellor's Report – Rev. Moore

- Noted improvements in diversity, now 20-24% minority enrollment.
- Praised campus inclusivity and growth.

Foundation Report – Dr. Guyton

- Giving Day results: 68 donors, including 34 alumni/community donors.
- Emphasized the importance of employee participation for grant opportunities.
- Development position for advancement will be posted.

5. Unfinished Business

The Board approved the following policies after the 30-day comment period:

- **Post-Tenure Policy**
 - Motion by Mr. Toman; second by Mr. Hastings; unanimously approved.
- **Attendance Policy**
 - Motion by Mr. Tolley; second by Mr. B. Cole; unanimously approved.
- **Immunization Policy** (with clerical edits)
 - Motion by Mr. Price; second by Mr. Toman; unanimously approved.
- **Online College Policy** (only the three-page policy; procedures to be developed)
 - Motion by Mr. Hastings; Second by Ms. Peterson; unanimously approved.
- **Alcoholic Beverages on Campus Policy**
 - Motion by Mr. Tolley; Second by Mr. Sheffler; Unanimously approved

6. New Business

Approval of Tuition and Fees 2025-2026

- No tuition increase proposed.
- Motion to approve tuition and fees as presented made by Mr. B. Cole, seconded by Mr. Toman, and unanimously approved.

7. Announcements

- Commencement: May 17, 2025.
- Faculty and Staff Appreciation Lunch: April 30, 2025.
- Valedictorian/Salutatorian Dinner: May 14, 2025.

8. Board Comments

Board members discussed flexibility for housing triples based on demand.

9. Public Comments

No public comments were registered.

10. Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. B. Cole, seconded by Mr. Toman, and approved unanimously.
- Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:09 PM.