

**Board of Governors Meeting Minutes**  
**Boyd Conference Room**  
**Thursday, August 28, 2025, 4:00 PM**

**Members Present:** Mr. Charlie Cole, Chair; Mr. Randall Price; Mrs. Rebecca Peterson, Ms. Cathy Deeb, Mr. Mike Hastings, Mr. Luke Roberts (Student Representative); Mr. Jack Sheffler;

**Virtual:** Mr. Tim McKenzie, Mr. Anthony Tolley, Mr. Ed Toman

**Members Absent:** Mr. Shannon Remines, Mr. Bill Cole

**Guests:** President Darrin Martin; Mr. Joshua Grubb; Mrs. Donna Linkous; Mrs. Cynthia Atwell-Higgins; Mr. Brent Benjamin; Dr. Sarita Rhonemus (virtual); Mr. Ryan Bailey; Mr. Ronald Shidemantle; Dr. Deirdre Guyton; Dr. Tabitha Young; Dr. Karen Grogan; Mr. Darrel Malamisura; Dean Bill Bennett; Mrs. Vanessa Godfrey; Mrs. Julie Orr; Mr. Steven Jarvis; Mr. Brodderick Tucker; Ms. Christina Sammarco; Mr. Andrew Vance; Mr. Ansel Ponder; Dr. Amanda Matoushek (virtual); Dr. Angela Lambert (virtual); Mrs. Terry Thompson (virtual); Mr. Johnny Jenkins (virtual); Dr. David McMillan (virtual); Mr. Earl Lee (virtual).

**1. Call to Order and Chair Remarks**

Chairman Charlie Cole called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Chairman Charlie Cole congratulated President Martin on his inauguration.

**2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. One minor change on the housing attachment (date needs to be changed to 8-28-25). Chairman Charlie Cole noted that the minutes have been received. A motion to receive or approve the minutes of the June meeting, as well as the committee reports for the June and August meetings was made. Rebecca Peterson seconded the motion.

**3. President's Report – Dr. Martin**

- President Martin discussed enrollment numbers and noted that the reason that the numbers are up was truly a group effort noting that the marketing team assisted with the con-flow; coaches building rosters; faculty and staff calling students, etc.
- President Martin discussed the \$400,000.00 loan that was borrowed from the Foundation and the plan to pay it back over the next four years (\$10,000.00 per month - \$100,000.00 per year). Chairman Cole asked Dr. Martin to briefly explain what the money will be used for. Dr. Martin stated that the money will be used for operating costs and there was a discussion about doing snow removal and grass cutting in house instead of outsourcing these services.
- President Martin noted that we have some property at the MEC that is currently not in use. We are looking at other ways to use these facilities (possibly for classrooms or lease buildings to another entity). Dr. Martin has a meeting with Bluestone on September 13 to discuss with them the possibility of leasing one of the buildings that is currently not in use.
- Dr. Martin noted that we have had a conservative effort to bring more classes to the campus and thanked the Provost, Deans, and the faculty for the growth we have had. Bringing students back to campus has been an adjustment.

- Josh Grubb, Dr. Deirdre Guyton and Izabella Kiser are meeting to begin working on identifying possible donors and to create a plan and strategies on the asking process.
- Donna will set up meetings with each board member on an individual basis just to meet and talk about the university and about our plans.

#### **4. Standing Reports**

##### **Academic Update – Dr. Rhonemus**

- Dr. Rhonemus referred BOG members to pages 29-30 of the Academic Affairs Committee Minutes from the August 22, 2025 meeting and asked if there were any questions.
- Dr. Rhonemus identified a conflict with the scheduled date of December 18 for the Faculty and Staff Open Forum with the BOG. Grades are due on December 15; after this, students and faculty will begin their break and will not return until January. The provost was asked to determine a more suitable time for the forum.
- Dr. Rhonemus noted that the tentative schedule for the BOG to meet with various Colleges will also need to be addressed for the December meeting. A new schedule will be forthcoming.
- Dr. Rhonemus noted a correction for the Academic Affairs Subcommittee minutes. HLC visit meetings will begin on September 19, 2025 (minutes stated September 12).

##### **Finance and Budget – Ms. Higgins-Atwell**

- Cynthia – update on budget
- Randy – goal is not to have same conversation on budget short falls, be conscious of collecting what is due the institution in a timely fashion.

##### **Safety and Security – EVP Benjamin**

- We had a contract with the Bluefield Police Department to do our on-campus police officer usage. For budget reasons, the Bluefield Police Department raised the price of the contract. We looked at options and decided we could bring the police officer position back to an in-house position. As of next week, Tony Palmer will be interim police officer for the University, putting more emphasis on being present in buildings on campus and being more visible.
- We are working with the president on an overall campus security and safety plan, which would include security preparedness, legal activities, natural disasters, etc. An emergency management committee comprised of faculty staff and students will be formed and emergency action plans will be put together. We will be asking for volunteers to work on each floor, someone to be in charge of the whole building and will be working with faculty and staff about helping people with special needs, etc.

##### **Enrollment Update – Mr. Shidemantle**

Mr. Ron Shidemantle presented the “Fall Credit Headcount Enrollment – 10 Year Comparison” – Please see the attached report.

##### **Faculty, Staff and Student Updates**

- Faculty: There were no specific updates from Dr. Jack Sheffler
- Staff: Mr. Tim McKenzie stated there was no report for staff, but we will start meeting more as the school year progresses.

- Students: Mr. Luke Roberts was positive stating that currently there are more students on campus, classes, are full, and SGA plans to do ten events per semester, noting that there will be a lot of student engagement.

#### **Community Outreach Report – Rev. Garry Moore**

- Reverend Garry Moore - absent

#### **Foundation Report – Dr. Guyton**

- Dr. Deirdre Guyton reviewed the “Report of Financials for July-August (partial) 2025 – Please see the attached.
- Bluefield State University has two new vans and Dr. Martin stated that a third van is coming soon.

#### **Special Orders (None)**

#### **Unfinished Business**

- Will postpone until after executive session

#### **New Business**

The Engineering Fundraising dinner will be held at the Club on the Green September 9, 2025. Tickets can be purchased for \$50.00 and a table can be purchased for \$400.00. This event was set to coincide with the coal show.

#### **Board Member Comments**

Mr. Luke Roberts (student representative asked if we will be serving food on campus. Dr. Martin stated that we will start this week coming up. We will start with one day. The grill will be open one hour later during the day. Information on this will be forthcoming.

#### **Public Comments**

Dr. Tabitha Young reported that we currently have a total of 32 students enrolled in the MBA program. Three new students began Summer 2025; 21 new students are registered for Fall 2025 and six students are returning from Spring 2025. Twelve of our new applicants were BSU alumni (five received their Business Undergraduate degree from Bluefield State University. Dr. Young stated that this is our goal to provide a feeding program within our own University.

Dr. Young also explained that we now have an onboarding process in place for non-business majors. A handbook has been written over the summer and is in the review process of edits and approval.

Dr. Martin stated that when the MBA program was initiated, it was all faculty and staff and they only needed to pay the \$500.00 administrative fee. This is the first time we have paying students and he extended his appreciation to Dr. Tabitha Young, Dean Karen Grogan and the other faculty that have been a part of this program.

#### **Executive Session**



Chairman Charlie Cole made a motion for the Board to go into Executive Session at 5:00 pm. Mrs. Rebecca Peterson seconded the motion. The Board of Governors went into Executive Session at 5:10 pm.