

Board of Governors Meeting Minutes
Boyd Conference Room
Thursday, December 18, 4:00 PM

Members Present: Mr. Bill Cole (Virtual), Mr. Charlie Cole, Ms. Cathy Deeb, Mr. Mike Hastings, Mr. Tim McKenzie, Mr. Randy Price, Mr. Shannon Remines (Virtual), Mr. Jack Sheffler (Virtual), Mr. Anthony Tolley.

Members Absent: Mr. Ed Toman

Guests: Mrs. Cynthia Higgins-Atwell, Mr. Ryan Bailey, Dr. William Bennett, Mr. Brent Benjamin, Mr. Josh Grubb, Dr. Deirdre Guyton, Mrs. Carolyn Jamkhandi, Dr. Sudhakar Jamkhandi, Mr. Steven Jarvis, Dr. Ted Lewis, Dr. Darrin Martin, Dr. Amanda Matoushek, Ms. Melisa McGuire, Mr. Garry Moore, Mrs. Julie Orr, Mr. Ansel Ponder, Dr. Sarita Rhonemus, Ms. Christina Sammarco, Mr. Ron Shidemantle, Mr. Brodderick Tucker, Mr. Andrew Vance.

Virtual: Mr. Bill Cole, Mr. Darrel Malamisura, Ms. Anne Pelchar, Mr. Shannon Remines, Mr. Jack Sheffler, Mrs. Angie Wassum, Mrs. Sherri Williams,

1. Call to Order and Chair Remarks

Chair Charlie Cole called the meeting of the Bluefield State University Board of Governors to order at 4:00 PM. The Chair offered holiday greetings and recognized the institution's recent enrollment growth.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved. No changes or comments were noted. The minutes were approved as presented.

3. President's Report – Dr. Martin

Dr. Martin presented a detailed enrollment report highlighting:

- A **7.8% headcount increase** year-over-year and **4.3% growth over the past four years**.
- Bluefield State ranked **first in growth** in several key categories among West Virginia institutions.
- Growth in dual enrollment, first-time freshmen, transfer students, and readmitted students.
- Applications up **30% overall**, acceptances up **70%**, including significant gains in transfer and readmit categories.

Dr. Martin emphasized that growth was a **campus-wide effort**, not solely driven by athletics, and discussed demographic challenges in the region. He also outlined financial stewardship measures being implemented to manage costs associated with growth, including:

- P-card spending caps and enhanced pre-approval requirements (Dr. Martin emphasized to watch spending and all athletic travel needs a pre-approval).
- Hiring freeze with exceptions for critical needs
- Review of adjunct and overload usage
- Emphasis on long-term sustainability and stewardship

4. Standing Reports

Alumni Report

There was no alumni report.

Academic Update – Dr. Sarita Rhonemus

- Announced application to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for a **Master’s in Engineering Technology**. The College of STEM made the request to HLC specific for a Master’s Degree in Engineering Technology.
- HLC visit scheduled for **March 9–10, 2026**.

Finance and Budget – Mrs. Cynthia Higgins-Atwell

- Spring bills have been distributed; payment plans are available (offering ten payments beginning December 12, 2025)
- Estimated financial aid award letters for Fall 2026 are scheduled to be mailed January 6, 2026.
- Reviewed current budget status and financial controls (Budget information was distributed – see attached).

Safety and Security – Mr. Brent Benjamin

Mr. Brent Benjamin reported on the following:

- Fire drills to begin in January, 2026. These drills will be at the MEC and various places.
- Evacuation maps to be updated (currently working with Tim McKenzie)
- Hazing reporting requirements completed ahead of deadline. This is a permanent part of the Cleary reports.
- Private security review postponed due to weather.
- Mr. Jack Sheffler suggested that we have an active shooter training.

Enrollment Update – Mr. Ron Shidemantle

- Enrollment increases confirmed across multiple categories. Current number show that there is a 30% increase in applications.
- Noted strong statewide comparative performance.
- Dr. Ted Lewis as been appointed as Interim Vice President of Student Affairs.

5. Faculty Representative Updates – Mr. Jack Sheffler

- No report.

6. Staff Representative Updates – Mr. Tim McKenzie

- No report

7. Student Representative Updates – Mr. Luke Roberts

- No report

8. Director of Community Outreach – Mr. Garry Moore

- Announced community holiday event on campus Saturday, December 20, 2025 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM
- Reported growth in Folds of Honor scholarships, increasing from 3 to 33 recipients over three years.

9. Foundation Report – Dr. Deirdre Guyton

- Fall appeal letters were mailed to over 15,000 recipients on November 28, 2025.
- Giving day (December 2, 2025) raised \$17,000.00 (\$20,127.40 to date).
- Annual fund total to date: \$62,831.95.

10. Policy Actions

Policy BG-102 – Policymaking

- One substantive comment recommending clarification regarding renewed comment periods for substantive changes.
- Mr. Randy Price made a motion and Mr. Anthony Tolley seconded the motion to revise and reissue for an additional 30-day comment period. The Board will vote in the next Board meeting on February 26, 2026.

Policy AC-201 – Academic Objectives and Assessment

- No comments received.
- Ms. Cathy Deeb made a motion to approve and Mr. Anthony Tolley seconded the motion.

Policy AC-212 – Credit for Prior Learning (New Policy)

- No comments received.

- Mr. Anthony Tolley made a motion to approve and Ms. Cathy Deeb seconded the motion.

Policy GA-617 – Title IX and Sex-Based Discrimination (New Policy)

- One non-substantive wording change (duplicative term was removed).
- Mr. Charlie Cole made a motion to approve and Mr. Randy Price seconded the motion.

11. New Business

- Announcement was made that food services in the Student Union are tentatively scheduled to open February 9, 2026, pending inspections.

12. Announcements and Comments

- Board members commended the enrollment news release and encouraged broader distribution to state leaders and stakeholders.

13. Executive Session

No executive session was requested.

14. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Mike Hastings to adjourn and Mr. Randy Price seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 4:48 PM.