Board of Governors Meeting Minutes
Boyd Conference Room
Thursday, June 18, 2026, 4:00 PM

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

Guests: Mr. Brent Benjamin, Mr. Aaron Crank (Virtual), Mr. Robbie Faulds, Mr. Curtis French (Virtual), Dr. Karen Grogan (Virtual), Mr. Josh Grubb, Ms. Carolyn Jamkhandi, Dr. Sudhakar Jamkhandi, Dr. Ted Lewis, Mr. Darrel Malamisura (Virtual), Mr. Cecil Marson, Dr. Darrin Martin, Dr. Amanda Matoushek (Virtual), Ms. Anne Pelchar (Virtual), Dr. Sarita Rhonemus, Ms. Christina Sammarco, Mr. Kerry Stauffer

1. Call to Order and Chair Remarks

Chair Charlie Cole called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., welcomed those in attendance and recognized Mr. Mike Hastings for his service during his final Board of Governors meeting, thanking him for his dedication to Bluefield State University. He also acknowledged Bluefield State University's Elementary Education Program for receiving an **A+ rating from the National Council on Teacher Quality**, congratulating the faculty and administration for this achievement.

2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the previous Board meeting were presented. Hearing no corrections, the minutes were approved as distributed.

3. President's Report – Dr. Darrin Martin

City of Bluefield Road Improvement Project

At the request of Chair Charlie Cole, the agenda was adjusted to allow representatives from the City of Bluefield to present first.

City Manager Cecil Marson, representatives from CTL Engineering, and former WV Secretary of Transportation Jimmy Wriston presented the proposed **Safe Streets for All** project surrounding the Bluefield State campus.

Highlights included:

- Construction of a roundabout at the main entrance to campus.
- Pedestrian safety improvements.
- Expanded sidewalks and shared-use paths connecting campus and residence halls.
- Improvements along Cherry Street.
- Additional roadway enhancements designed to improve campus accessibility and traffic flow.

- Construction is anticipated to take approximately 18–24 months once initiated, with work expected to begin after engineering and right-of-way acquisition are completed.

Board members discussed pedestrian crossings, traffic flow, preservation of the existing pedestrian tunnel, campus entrance signage, and opportunities to utilize excavation material for future campus projects.

Department of Energy Partnership

President Martin announced Bluefield State University is developing a Memorandum of Understanding with the **U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory**.

Potential benefits include:

- Student internships
- Faculty research opportunities
- Innovation and patent development
- Expanded STEM partnerships

The partnership represents an opportunity for Bluefield State University to collaborate with a nationally recognized research institution.

Accreditation

President Martin reported:

- The Higher Learning Commission review concluded with all standards successfully met.
- Final accreditation action is expected in July.
- The Radiologic Technology program also successfully met all accreditation standards.

He commended faculty and staff for their extensive work during the accreditation process.

Academic Programs

President Martin announced final approval from the Higher Education Policy Commission for the **Master of Science in Engineering Technology**, which will begin enrolling students for Fall 2026.

The program:

- Offers multiple engineering concentrations.
- Supports enrollment growth.
- Expands graduate education opportunities.
- Serves regional workforce needs.

Administration also reported preliminary planning has begun for additional graduate degree offerings as part of a long-term strategy to expand graduate education.

Online College Initiative

President Martin provided an update on development of the University's online academic offerings, highlighting existing online programs and emphasizing online education as an important strategy for future enrollment growth amid declining regional demographics.

Facilities Updates

Updates included:

- Air conditioning installed in the Student Center.
- Air conditioning being installed in Ned Shott Gymnasium.
- Campus sidewalk replacement projects.
- Continued deferred maintenance projects at the Medical Education Center.

First-Year Experience Residence Hall

President Martin presented plans for renovation of Building I into a **First-Year Experience Residence Hall**, anticipated to provide approximately 50–60 beds.

The facility will include:

- Academic tutoring
- Advising services
- Counseling support
- Study spaces
- Kitchen facilities
- Specialized resident assistants

Funding sources include Foundation resources, Title III funds, grant requests, and private fundraising efforts.

Library Renovation Initiative

President Martin discussed plans to modernize the library into a collaborative learning environment featuring:

- Group study rooms
- Quiet study areas
- Podcast rooms
- Modern furnishings
- Community meeting spaces

Fundraising efforts are underway to support the renovation.

Personnel Updates

The University continues recruitment efforts for:

- Chief Financial Officer/Controller
- Human Resources position

Interviews are underway with hopes of filling both positions by the end of June.

Standing Reports

Academic Affairs

Dr. Sarita Rhonemus reported that Academic Affairs had no additional updates beyond committee reports, noting approval of the Master of Science in Engineering Technology program.

Safety and Security

Mr. Benjamin updated the Board on implementation of a new campus security mapping system required under recently enacted state legislation.

The system will:

- Integrate with Mercer County 911.
- Provide detailed building mapping.
- Improve emergency response capabilities.
- Be funded through an existing grant.

Enrollment

Joshua Grubb reported enrollment indicators remain positive.

Highlights included:

- Applications exceeding the previous year (23 more than year).
- Increased admitted students (63 more admitted than last year).
- Growth in new freshman applications (60 more than last year).
- Continued strength in graduate enrollment (54 applications for MBA).
- Positive early response to the new master's program.

Enrollment projections remain favorable for Fall 2026. An updated enrollment report will be provided in August.

Student Affairs

Dr. Lewis reported numerous student affairs initiatives, including:

- New electronic residence hall check-in/check-out system with photographic documentation.
- Resident Assistant hiring and training.
- First-Year Experience housing assignments.
- International student housing initiatives.
- Academic recovery improvements.
- New Student Orientation programming.
- Expanded student engagement activities.
- Community utilization of the University pool.
- Planning for matriculation ceremonies (August 14 at 4:00 p.m.) and welcome week.

Board discussion included residence hall deposits, damage assessment procedures, student accountability, and continued enhancement of student services.

Faculty Representative Updates, Staff Representative Updates, Director of Community Outreach Report, Foundation Report

No updates were provided.

New Business

The Board considered the following items:

- City of Bluefield Road Improvement Project presentation.
- Master of Science in Engineering Technology tuition.

  Mr. Randy Price made a motion that tuition will be $675.00 per credit hour. Ms. Cathy Deeb seconded the motion.

- 2026–2027 Board Committee Assignments.
- 2026–2027 Board Meeting Schedule.

  Chairman Charlie Cole stated that the August meeting will remain on its current schedule. He further noted that the Board will consider and approve the remaining meeting schedule for the year during the August meeting.

Discussion was held regarding each item as presented.

Announcements and Comments

No announcements were made, and no comments were offered.

Executive Session

Mr. Bill Cole made a motion to enter into Executive Session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mike Hastings. The Board entered Executive Session at 5:19 PM as permitted under West Virginia Code §6-9A-4 to discuss:

- Personnel matters
- Potential real estate
- Legal matters
- Other matters permitted by law

Chairman Charlie Cole asked the President to remain for the Executive Session. Thereafter, the President was excused from the Executive Session and the Board continued in Executive Session. Following continued discussions in Executive Session, Mr. Bill Cole made a motion to exit which was seconded by Mr. Randy Price. Upon a positive vote, the Board returned to open session.

In open session, Chairman Charlie Cole advised that, during the Executive Session, the Board interviewed President Martin and discussed his performance with him. After excusing President Martin from the Executive Session, the Board discussed at length the personnel evaluation of President Martin and the renewal of Dr. Martin's contract to continue serving Bluefield State as its President.

Mr. Anthony Tolley made a motion that Chairman Charlie Cole is authorized to negotiate the terms of and finalize a contract of employment with Dr. Martin for Dr. Martin's continued presidency of Bluefield State University, to execute said contract on behalf of the Board, and to thereafter have such contract communicated to the HEPC, as appropriate, without further action or review by the Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Toman. The said motion was approved by unanimous vote of the voting members.

Adjournment

With no further discussion, Chairman Charlie Cole made a motion to adjourn the Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mike Hastings. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.