



Faculty Assembly Meeting

March 1, 2024

Attendance. In person:

Vanessa Godfrey, Julie Orr, Roy Pruett, Rodney Montague, James Pruett, Darrel Malamisura, Amy Atwell, Terene Stiltner, Amanda Matoushek, Ashish Patel, Sandra Wynn, Bill Bennett, Betty Nash, Jack Sheffler, Erik Baldwin, Kerry Stauffer, * Brent Benjamin, * Sarita Rhonemus, * Ron Hypes (*Administration)

Online Attendance: Michelle Taylor, Joel Vance, Albertus Barnes, Jason Stafford, Brittany Anderson, Kristin Hicks, Adrian Ayersman, Tabitha Young, Jeff Yeager, Vince Mateescu, Shelia Sargeant- Martin, Amanda Quesenberry, Tom Russell, Jerry Wood, Tara Mullins, Bonnie Reese, Vin Balok

Call to Order: Julie called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm

Discussion of February Minutes: No one had any corrections or revisions. Amanda Matoushek made the motion to approve the February Minutes and Roy Pruett seconded the motion. All were in favor with no nays or abstentions.

Presidents Report: Mr. Benjamin gave the report on Behalf of the President who was unavailable. He began by updating all on the progress the Basketball teams had made in the CIAA tournament. Bluefield State has been receiving a lot of good will from other HBCU's to become involved in many other events that are offered through HBCU's. On another topic, an item that BSU is watching closely is the FAFSA application. It is being revised by the federal government and there is difficulty getting the changes to run through any Higher ed Institution. Due to the delay of FAFSA being changed, each application will need to be entered manually. This is a monumental task.

BOG meeting will be March 7th at 4pm. All are encouraged to attend.

Security issues: Parking tags will be reinstated and vehicles will be registered once again. Fire drills will be re-instituted on campus and in dorms. These will be mandatory for all to participate. Active shooter Training will be scheduled and will be mandatory. We will need to arrange to attend when it is scheduled.

In response to concerns re: smell of "drugs" in the dorms. Two Police officers and a drug dog made a surprise visit to the dorms. The dog did not make a hit anywhere except one trash can that was empty. This type of unannounced visits will continue routinely.

Bids are out to security companies to provide security on campus which will include evenings. He also discussed a potential opportunity for additional housing for students through other developers/ investors without having to spend capital from the institution immediately.

Brent Benjamin & Ronnie Hypes: Julie asked about the housekeeping employee's status. He explained that they are putting bids out to companies to provide housekeeping services for the whole campus. She

inquired how our current employees would be affected by this. They stated it was possible that our current employees may have to change companies to keep working here. He said to hire them would be a cost factor and would have to also employ management for the employees. But also stated that it is possible not much would change for BSU.

Presidential search will be discussed at the Board meeting. He expects interviews to take place during the fall since we are already near the end of the semester. There are negotiations going on with the potential football coach at this time that cannot be discussed currently.

Provost/ HLC Report: Response report was submitted Feb 29th. It was 98 pages. It was confirmed that HLC received it. HLC hearing is March 12th. There will be an all campus meeting on Friday March 8th to inform everyone of HLC report at 1:30pm. And a second meeting will be held on Friday March 22nd. The first meeting will be held in the Basic Science Auditoriums. We will not know anything about the results of the hearing until 30 – 60 days later.

There have been 5 executive orders from the Interim President to the BOG since he became President. They can be found on the BOG policy page. Executive order 23-004 was rescinded. Executive order 23-005 Reorganized the academic units back to the original 4 colleges. Organizational chart is posted for everyone's review. Executive order 24-001 suspension of the procedures for Post Tenure review to allow faculty input. The next round of Post Tenure review will be announced in the Fall of 2025. Executive order 24-002 is the re-establishment of the old College council which is now University Council. 24-003 Notice required for any new policy. No new policies will be posted during the summer or during a Holiday. The 30-day comment period will be extended if it falls during any of these periods.

Beckley Campus courses in the Fall '24 semester, courses will be offered as usual and as far as she knows things will continue as usual.

The HLC Team going to Chicago on March 12th are Dr. Martin, Dr. Rhonemus, Charlie Cole, Carolyn Long, Julie Orr, and Dr. Michelle Taylor.

Academic Affairs committee will meet at 2pm on March 7th in Mahood Hall.

One faculty member inquired about the Wi-Fi Access in the Hotel where athletes are staying due to one not taking their exam. There were other students that traveled who managed to take their exams. We need to develop a policy on such situations for all faculty to refer to. Academic Affairs committee will address this.

Questions: James Quesenberry was not available, but requested any questions be recorded and sent to him. Michelle asked about what can be done to assure athletes have books/ vouchers for the beginning of the semester as opposed to 5 weeks in. It was suggested that Felicia Oakes and Ryan Bailey both be included in this conversation as well as the bookstore.

Ron Hypes answered questions related to the Dirt pile and the progress of the "grassy knoll" - the weather has put a delay on this. They hope to begin soon.

Michelle asked what our CFI was. HLC rates us at 1.3. HEPC doesn't give us credit for being debt free and they rated our CFI as -2. The HLC has us inline with most other institutions in the State.

Jack asked about student fees and how they can be spent/ used. Ron explained that they try to allocate a portion of the fees to each school but there are many other fees associated with labs/ specialized programs that requires money. (examples: student workers, lab maintenance, housekeeping etc.). Mr. Hypes also stated he would be recommending we drop the academic support fee to allow students to be

able to take more than 15 hours if needed to graduate and not have to pay for the extra hours. This enables students to take all courses needed to progress in their field of study in a timely manner.

Jack Sheffler as our BOG rep and ACF rep gave a report. The Hunger Free Campus Act – Senate Bill 292 is being discussed and also, they are discussing how student fees are being spent at the ACF meetings. Apparently, there is a problem all over the state with how student fees are used. Much Discussion took place between faculty about fees being raised by administration and approved by the BOG and this is done without any discussion with Deans or Directors related to the specific programs. The entire amount of money is not accessible to be used by the programs freely for their own specific program needs.

Open Forum: Vanessa brought to the attention of the Faculty that our former President is listed on his new blog as “Bluefield State University President Emeritus”. Faculty cannot be recommended for Emeritus status until they have been retired for a year. These guidelines came directly from the HEPC. The President was given this status the Summer we were granted University Status.... well before the President retired. The faculty voted to ask the BOG to rescind this status. The faculty voted unanimously to ask the BOG to do this, and copy HEPC on the request. Vanessa made a motion that we present this to our BOG, Rodney Montague seconded the motion. All were in favor with no opposed, and one abstention. We may not be able to get this on the most recent agenda but Jack will try. We feel this would show proactive movements to correct a wrong if the BOG follows through with this request. The faculty strongly does not want someone who placed such a bad stain on our Institution to have the privilege of Emeritus status. It is to be noted that he was granted this title while still employed at BSU.

Committee Reports: University Council had their first meeting but the President couldn't make it due to a very important meeting. Academic Affairs meets next week. Promotion and Tenure committee also meets next week. The committee members are asking for information/ criteria for the different faculty ranks. Darrel stated it appears these criteria are no longer in writing anywhere. Amanda Matoushek found some information on myBSU under the faculty handbook. But it may not be detailed enough for referring to those up for Promotion or Tenure. If anyone has any input please send that to Bonnie Reese who is Chair of the committee. AI Committee is working on the academic Honesty policy for courses related to the use of AI.

Old Business: The academic load/workload policy is posted on the FA webpage under the Task Force section for load/ overload. Amanda gave an update and synopsis of the new policy and faculty are encouraged to review this.

Housekeeping update: The faculty are upset to think that we have the potential to lose our dependable/ trustworthy housekeeping staff due to contract bids being out. We still continue to support our housekeeping staff and request that they be considered as full hires of BSU.

Julie has submitted 3 scientifically based articles to Mr. Benjamin and President Martin on the effects of secondhand Marijuana exposure. Being exposed to contaminated air regularly and for long periods of time present physical and cognitive effects on those exposed. Faculty have concerns of being in an environment that may lend itself to this at the MEC.

New Business:

Change to By-Laws by FAEC in their first committee meeting

Article 2.1 (allowing Associate Deans, Directors, and Chairs to have voting privileges in Faculty Assembly)

Article 4.4.3 (removing the phrase “In consultation with the President” from the Chair’s responsibility to create the agenda for each meeting)

Article 6.1 (remove the “subject to the approval of the University’s BOG, in consultation with the President” clause about the amending the by-laws)

All voted in favor to present to the board a request to place these changes in writing as a policy to prevent this from changing again in the future. None opposed and no abstentions.

It was brought to the attention of the Assembly that Social Sciences was denied to hire a full- time employee for the sociology concentration, but will staff those courses with adjunct and visiting faculty instead. It is a concern that this may be a pattern in the future to “save money” for the University.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 4pm. Betty Nash made the motion to adjourn and Roy Pruett seconded the motion.

Next Meeting will be April 5th, at 2pm. Elections will be held for Assembly Chair, and Vice-Chair at this meeting.

Submitted by Vanessa Godfrey- Faculty Assembly Secretary.