



Faculty Assembly Meeting Minutes

Feb. 2, 2024

Attendance: In Person; Darrell Thompson, *Terene Stiltner, Roy Pruett, James Pruett, Ashish Patel, Michelle Taylor, Amanda Matoushek, Rodney Montague, * Sandra Wynn, Kristin Hicks, Jacob Clarkon, Jack Sheffler, *Bill Bennett, Darrel Malamisura, *Angela Lambert, Vanessa Godfrey, and Julie Orr.

Virtual Attendance: Sherri Williams, Betty Nash, Tom Russell, Sara Roberson, Katherine St. Clair, Brittany Anderson, David Balok, * Karen Grogan, Amanda Quesenberry, * James Quesenberry, Darshan Arachchi, Mark Botts, Sarah Crews, Shelia Sargent- Martin, Tabitha Young, Tara Mullins, Vincent Mateescu, Amy Lane, Cheryl Belcher, Jeff Yeager, Bonnie Reese, and Sally Sale.

Administrators/staff in attendance for reporting purposes: Interim- President Martin, Ronnie Hypes, Ron Shidemantle, Christina Sammarco, Brent Benjamin, Interim- Provost Sarita Rhonemus, and Megan Hicks.

*Indicates non-voting members; 33 voting members present

Call to Order: Julie Orr Called the meeting to order at precisely 3pm. She called for review of the January minutes and any edits needed. With no amendments Roy Pruett moved that the minutes be accepted and Michelle Taylor seconded the motion. With no opposing votes the January minutes were approved.

Discussion of November Minutes: These minutes have been long since approved and cannot be edited once approved by the Assembly. However, Sherri Williams has requested that it go on record from the time of approval of the November minutes to current time, She and Jane Charnock have been in discussion numerous times in relation to the vaccination policy. There has been input from a medical professional on this policy and the policy should be up for vote by the BOG during the February meeting.

President's Report: The President opened with stating that Brent Benjamin wrote his report for him but he was going to relay the information. First item of importance is a special BOG meeting on February 8th 4pm related to the HLC hearing. All Faculty are encouraged to attend/ participate in the meeting. There is going to be a Google Meet link. He did ask that if you wish to speak in the meeting, that you attend in person. One item to be discussed is the Post Tenure Review being placed on hold for 1 year. He encourages faculty to review the proposed policy and give input on any edits you may want to see. Or if we are happy with the policy the Task Force put together, we need to give that input as well. The Hiring Policy from August 2022 has been changed and will also be up for vote as well. Much of the policy is under the same guidelines we had previous to our Former Leader. There will be job postings, search committees will be formed to interview and review the candidates. "The President's Office will not be infringing on and doing unilateral hires in Academics". All postings in the Presidents office will also be posted and open for applicants. Julie asked about the crowding in Boyd conference room during the BOG meetings and the possibility of moving the meetings to a larger room. Brent responded that this is something that they could look into. Open Comments on Proposed Policies the deadline is Tuesday the 6th of February. The President would like more comments on the FAEC policy proposal changes. The President ended with thanking everyone and speaking of trust and hoping that faculty can see the good

faith effort that has been shown thus far from the Board and himself. Sarita also pointed out that the Academic Objectives policy is being put on hold for a year. This is also being discussed at the special BOG meeting on the 8th.

Housing Report Brent Benjamin: BSU met with the city to assess the needs for housing in the area as well as campus housing needs. A study that was performed by Virginia Tech and also by WVU law to assess all housing in our area was reviewed. There is a concern to keep our upper classmen from falling prey to questionable landlords. Older houses in Bluefield are less expensive rent wise than in the Princeton area, but utility costs are much higher due to the condition of the older homes. We will be working with the city to push code enforcement to improve housing options for all citizens. On another topic, the Feb. 8th BOG will be largely focused on the HLC hearing. The Feb. 29th BOG meeting will be covering other concerns. Mr. Benjamin once again encourages faculty to provide comments on the Hiring Policy as well as any other policies that are open for comment. Julie has offered an option for those faculty who may not feel comfortable sending in comments in their own name. They can be sent to Julie or Michelle and they will be forwarded on their behalf anonymously.

Provost/ HLC Report: Sarita has requested Julie to send her the Chairs of each committee. Julie responded that at this point no committees have met due to waiting on the BOG approval of these committees and proposed policy on the 8th of February. As soon as the policy is approved, committees will have their first meeting, Chairs will be voted on and names sent to Sarita. Assessment committee is scheduled to meet next Wednesday the 7th. A time was not given. The HLC response team is meeting regularly to address concerns in the report. Sarita will be writing the report with Dr. Taylor assisting and gathering evidence. The Team going to the HLC Hearing is Dr. Sarita Rhonemus- Interim-Provost, Interim- President Martin, Charlie Cole- BOG Chair, Carolyn Long- Consultant, Dr. Michelle Taylor – Faculty Assembly Vice- Chair and Julie Orr- Faculty Assembly Chair. The team will leave on March 11th to be in Chicago in time for the March 12th 8am meeting. The meeting will be 4 hours long and then the team will return home. BSU will not hear anything for 30-60 days from the HLC.

The Workload Proposal that was developed by the task force is being reviewed by Ron Hypes due to financial concerns. She wants to also include the academic affairs committee in the review and decision process of this proposal. Program Reviews are being done following the guidelines of series 10 legislative rules. Dr. Rhonemus has thanked the programs that are working diligently on these. The program reviews will fall under the purview of academic affairs. Shout out to the academic appeals committee as they have had a busy start to the semester already. Academic Integrity guidelines flowchart has been finalized and will be on the my BSU portal under faculty resources. Sarita asked if anyone has signed up for the personnel development committee. Julie responded that she has one response from one school thus far but that's all. Student evaluation of faculty: We had no choice but to migrate to the web. We left our previous vendor and they kept our evaluation data from Last semester (Fall '23). Our version was no longer supported by the vendor. Banner staff have been working diligently to address the configuration problems. If all goes well those evals will be sent out soon. Additionally, the price of the new version quadrupled for BSU. Live Text: We need students to register themselves and get their key code. Faculty should encourage students to check their emails related to live text. Sarita closed her remarks with asking us to think of how we would define shared governance and the need for participation. In the constitution she suggested we add the word "purposeful" along with the word "forceful" that is already in the wording to define our purpose. The first meeting of University Counsel will be held on February 14th. Time TBA. The faculty handbook needs to be updated. We need

to develop a committee for this or find a committee that this task will fall under. Sarita asked if we were CAVE dwellers... Colleagues Against Virtually Everything. Or do we know anyone that is one? Sarita also left us with the 4 agreements all faculty, staff, and students can follow that President Martin mentions regularly: Be impeccable with your word, Don't take anything personal, Don't make assumptions, and Always do your best.

Enrollment Numbers: Ron Shidemantle/ Christina Sammarco- He discussed the mission of the admissions office and recruitment. We will be hiring two additional recruiters/counselors to go on the road. The recruitment staff attended 44 ACRO tours in WV and 15 in Va. They attend high schools in the Fall and Spring. Trying to keep the relationships with the local schools. Additionally, they attend the community colleges and technical schools and community fairs. New students we retained 75% of them from fall '23 to Spring '24. Overall student athletes we retained 72% from Fall '23 to Spring 24. We retained 78% of full-time students that are non-athletic from Fall '23 to Spring '24. The question was asked if students were leaving to go elsewhere or if they just simply didn't make it academically. Ron stated this information was a report that would need to come from Marviene in the Registrar's office. The freshman head count number was reviewed from 2015 to now. We have picked up a lot of students from out of state or out of Town but we have lost much of our local area students. As of today, we were up 16% in applications from new students. Those that have been accepted are up 65%. From last year. The goal is to actually get them to complete and attend BSU when it's all said and done. Challenges are with staffing, campus appearance, financial aid issues, and the recent overall reputation of the University. Sandy also pointed out that the federal government is expecting a delay in dispersing financial aid in the Fall. Ron then asked Faculty to attend recruitment fairs and trying to recruit more students. Christina stated: we need campus engagement and faculty involvement. Sandy mentioned that many of us will be going to Concord on Feb 8th for a career fair for all Mercer County Juniors and Seniors. Discussion then took place on touch points with those that have accepted and stay in touch with them to help draw them completely in to BSU. Faculty are willing to also contact students that are interested in their respective areas to help them feel welcome and wanted at BSU.

Community Connections and The Counseling Center/ Megan Hicks- Megan spoke to us about a collegiate recovery program that is available for any student that has been affected by substance abuse or mental health issues that lead them to substance abuse. Many addictions take place in college when students start taking meds to help with concentration or to perform better in some way. They offer a "Be the one recovery ally" training that she would like to get in the classrooms. The program also offers Narcan training for students and staff. Currently they have an intern that has been charged with training 100 students in medication safety. So, if anyone has a class opportunity to invite her to do the training it would be appreciated. They have also started a grief support group. Megan left her card for all faculty to pick up. It was also mentioned the center has placed one boxes on the walls in each building with CPR masks, a training video, and naloxone in them. They have also placed fentanyl test strips in unmarked envelopes for students to pick up to test their substances prior to using. Vanessa asked where they were located in Dickason Hall... and she stated she believed they were in the main lobby and perhaps the student bathrooms but she was not 100% sure. Megan closed with welcoming any invitation to come into the classes or to field any questions that faculty may have.

Faculty Athletic Representative Report/James Quesenberry- James gave an update on previous questions regarding about who can write excuses for Athletes. Only licensed medical professionals should be writing medical excuses. He discussed sending out some "guidelines" for all faculty to read

over in relation to athletics and what his job description would be. Sherri Williams asked for clarification due to it not being made very clear at first what specifically he was referring to. James then clarified his statements for all to be on the same page of understanding.

Financial Report/ Ron Hypes- First item discussed was the need to have a line item in the budget for the Faculty Athletic Rep to attend meetings per NCAA rules. He then explained total expenses through January '24. The expenses have had to be paid out of some reserve money. Our budget should be expected to be tight again this year. The financial audit has been completed with a clean opinion and a few findings are expected from the single audit from Earnst and Young with the state but they are minor problems that can be fixed easily. Staff Positions are being evaluated for need and viability when the position becomes vacant to assess the need to re- fill that position. Faculty Positions; they are trying to get those approved as quickly as possible. Title III money was explained and the fact that BSU is limited on what Title III money can be used for. Program Review reports will also help with cost analysis per program and planning for the budget. Several large projects are out for bid right now. Security, Food Service and vending, Re- developing the softball field, 2 HVAC projects, MEC 2nd floor build out, and fixing the dirt pile where Heritage Village was supposed to be. Expect that 2025 may also be a tight budget unless we have a HUGE enrollment increase. Jack Sheffler had a question regarding the Increase in PEIA coverage (a 10% increase) and how that will affect faculty pay. Are there pay increases planned? Mr. Hypes stated that last year the Institution absorbed the increased costs of PEIA. But at this point he is unsure how that will be handled. Brent Benjamin then started to explain that Campus Carry becomes effective July 1st. There is no funding from the state to support all the safety features necessary. He would like a task force to work on this for guidelines of safe areas/ vs carry areas and all factors to be considered. Which also leads us to Security issues at the MEC and on campus. James Quesenberry would like to serve on this task force and offered to train any faculty that would want their concealed carry permit. Julie Orr also volunteered to be on that task force due to her mental health background. Vanessa then pointed out the fact that our Campus has never had any type of active shooter training in addition to the fact that our campus has no Security. Switching modes, Sandy asked about what happened to BSU Day at the legislature? Mr. Benjamin agreed that we need to get started attending again and all faces need to be present to show what BSU truly is and what our needs are. He stated that during the most recent Statewide Presidents call, Interim-President Martin attended and it was the first time in 4 years we had a president on that call.

OPEN Forum: There were no faculty that signed up to speak in the open forum.

Committee Reports: At this point there are none due to not being able to meet until the BOG approves the FAEC bylaws.

BOG Report/ Jack Sheffler Faculty Rep: He gave a report from the ACF meeting. PEIA increase which has been discussed. The legislature is trying to establish a hunger free campus bill to help students. They are also interested in creating a statewide AI training for all. Jack was pleased to know two people from our area as part of the group.

Old Business: Amanda Matoushek brought up the Workload proposal that is now in the provost office. She mentioned she had to answer questions at Deans Counsel and Sarita wanted us to re-work it. The faculty has already approved and voted on it. So now it is in the Provost's hands. Much discussion about faculty just wanting to be paid equitably for the work that is done. Adjunct/ overload pay is the lowest of any in the state. Sarita mentioned sending it to the academic committee. The academics committee

is made up of the same faculty that voted in favor of the proposal to begin with. Faculty feels strongly that it takes as much work to prep and teach a class for 4 students as there is for 20 students. While there may be some difference in grading load, it absolutely takes the same prep and effort to prepare and teach. Also, the numbers that are to be considered as a fully enrolled course have changed through the many years. The main push back seems to be coming from 2 of the four Deans in the University.

New Business: Julie reiterated that we do not have Campus Security on our campus. Darrel also mentioned that if you accidentally lock yourself out of a building after 4, there is no one to even call on campus at a switchboard. The parking tags need to be re-instated as well to be able to track vehicles that are blocking entrances or other cars, we need to know if vehicles on campus belong or not, parking violations etc. Housekeeping Update: The faculty are in favor of continuing to support the hiring of dependable quality housekeeping staff as permanent employees of BSU with benefits. Vanessa Suggested that the Faculty draft a proposal to present to the BOG at the end of February meeting. Julie also mentioned to an SGA member that perhaps the students also get behind this initiative. Vanessa made a motion that we begin the process of drafting a statement to be sent out to all of the assembly members for review and we be placed on the BOG agenda for the Feb 29th meeting. Amanda Matoushek seconded that motion and all were in favor. By Law Amendment: We are hopeful that the BOG approves this amendment to the by laws and we can move forward with the committees and begin operations as we once new it. Julie made a closing statement that we feel things are slowly moving in the right direction.

Prior to Adjournment it was discussed that we consider an earlier start time. We will review the teaching schedules of faculty again to see what will work best. Darrel also stated we could have the administration send in their reports ahead of time for faculty review and then have the representatives present at the meeting for Q&A only.

With no further business to discuss, Michelle Taylor made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jack Sheffler seconded the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.