



West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Higher Education
News Clippings

Week of March 22, 2009



March 23, 2009

Higher Ed Spared from Budget Cuts

(Charleston)...The recession has hit just about every segment of West Virginia's economy. But how will it impact higher education? That's a question the Chancellor of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission doesn't know the answer to.

Brian Noland says he's been looking at application numbers from colleges and universities around the state. At some schools the numbers are up at others they're stagnate or down.

As far as in-state students, Noland says West Virginians will still have the same opportunities to get a college education. "I'm extremely confident with the investments that President Obama has made in the Pell Grant coupled with our state's need based and merit based programs, the doors of opportunity for students across the state regardless of income level will remain open."

Governor Joe Manchin cut the proposed state budget last week by 4-percent, asking all departments to tighten their belts as much as possible. But Noland says both he and the governor are dedicated to offering students every opportunity to get a college degree and that won't change with the budget. "There will be no cuts to our state's financial aid programs regardless of how bad the budget gets."

But the question Noland can't answer is how the economy will impact out of state student enrollment. "For those students from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland who have come to places like Shepherd, WVU and West Liberty it's an unknown to see how their numbers may change."

Noland says they'll have a better idea of the impact in a few months.

Out of state students pay on average \$1,500 less for tuition in West Virginia than they do in surrounding states.

March 25, 2009

Promise scholarships could hike standards if tuition cap fails

By Lawrence Messina, The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - West Virginia's Promise scholarship program will almost certainly ratchet up its test score requirement if the Legislature balks at capping its annual awards at \$4,500, officials said Wednesday.

Hiking the minimum ACT composite score from 22 to 24, as contemplated for the next school year, would eliminate nearly a third of the high school seniors who landed the merit-based scholarship for this school year.

But the proposal that Promise officials are weighing would raise the minimum score to 25 the following year. That would deny Promise to nearly 42 percent of this year's scholars.

Higher Education Policy Commission Chairman Brian Noland said Promise has few alternatives. He cited estimates that suggest that as demand for the awards begins to exceed available revenues, Promise will be short \$1.4 million next year unless major changes are made.

That funding gap will grow to \$16 million by 2014.

"If nothing happens this session, I think we're going to have to put every possible alternative on the table to ensure we live within our means," Noland told The Associated Press.

Promise now covers tuition and fees at any of the state's public colleges and universities, and an equivalent amount at its private institutions, for up to four years. Nearly 45 percent of the Promise scholars attend West Virginia University, the most expensive public school at \$5,100 a year.

The program has exploded since its 2002 debut, when it helped 3,555 students at a cost of \$10.2 million. It expects to spend \$42.3 million this school year sending 8,993 West Virginians to college.

"People are apprehensive about changing what has been an extremely successful program," Noland said. "This is one of the most crucial decisions this Legislature will make about higher education."

Debate over Gov. Joe Manchin's proposed scholarship cap, recommended by a study commission earlier this year, has kept the bill idled in the Senate Education Committee. While a subcommittee endorsed it with minor changes Tuesday, it must pass the Senate by next Wednesday to survive

Increasing Promise's funding appears unlikely because lawmakers face cutting the state general revenue budget by nearly \$200 million. But Noland said hiking the ACT criteria would have harsh consequences.

The ACT option would likely not apply to current high school seniors, he said. But he noted that just 19 percent of West Virginia seniors now qualify under the current standards, which also include a 3.0 grade point average.

for both core and overall classes. Promise has also previously raised its criteria to slow its growth.

"If we move to 25, we've set the bar so high, it's become an unrealistic promise for most West Virginians," Noland said.

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

March 26, 2009

Promise cap may lead students to pick smaller schools

by Ry Rivard, Daily Mail staff and by Michelle Saxton, Daily Mail Capitol Reporter

CHARLESTON, W.Va.--Nearly half of the state's Promise scholars are enrolled at West Virginia University, but some observers believe that percentage is certain to shrink if the Legislature limits the amount paid out to cover tuition.

Since it began in 2002, the program has covered 100 percent of tuition costs at public colleges and universities in West Virginia, with the exception of a few specialized majors.

If the payout is capped and doesn't increase to keep up with ever-rising tuition expenses, more students likely will choose smaller schools with lower tuition, officials say.

Of the state's 9,095 Promise scholars in 2008, 4,238 (47 percent) were enrolled at WVU, according to the state Higher Education Policy Commission.

Marshall had the next highest number with 1,484 Promise recipients, or 16 percent.

To control the program's cost, which is now \$42 million annually, Gov. Joe Manchin is supporting legislation to cap the annual payout at \$4,500 per student. That is not enough to pay the full tuition at Marshall, WVU or several other public four-year schools.

And that could be a boon for community colleges, according to Joseph Badgley, president of West Virginia State Community and Technical College.

"My sense is that it could cause some folks to say, 'Well, this is not enough money for me to go to the baccalaureate institutions that I want to. Maybe I will start my first two years at a community college and then transfer,' " Badgley said.

Badgley's school had only

10 Promise scholars in 2008. A total of just 179 were enrolled at the state's nine other community and technical colleges.

Of the state's other public colleges and universities, Fairmont State had 487 Promise scholars; Concord, 453; Shepherd, 323; West Liberty, 247; WVU Tech, 166; WVU-Parkersburg, 142; Glenville, 118; WVSU, 111; Potomac State, 101; and Bluefield, 80.

Part of the reason for the low number at community and technical colleges is that the Promise recipients are required to have high GPAs and good ACT scores, so they are top students who are more likely to seek four-year degrees. And, other than room and board fees, there is no difference in cost for students to attend a public four-year or a public two-year college with the Promise.

Badgley is already considering an advertising campaign for his school that would focus on the fact that a capped Promise Scholarship could go further for its recipients if they begin their education at a community college.

But Badgley also thinks that while the cap may cause some people to think about going to a community college, they will decide to enroll for more than just economic reasons.

"The opportunity to a start at a community college that is closer to home makes for an easier transition for some students," Badgley said.

The legislation that Manchin is backing is expected to be taken up today in the Senate Education Committee.

If the Legislature balks at capping the amount paid out, it is almost certain that Promise officials once again will tighten eligibility requirements.

Hiking the minimum ACT composite score from 22 to 24 would eliminate nearly a third of the high school seniors now eligible for Promise. Raising it to 25 is also under discussion. That would deny Promise to nearly 42 percent of this year's scholars.

Another bill, sponsored by Delegates Virginia Mahan, D-Summers, and Nancy Guthrie, D-Kanawha, would provide the full scholarship to students whose families make less than \$50,000 a year, two-thirds of the scholarship to students whose families make between \$50,000 and \$100,000 and one-third of the scholarship to students whose families make more than \$100,000.

"Everybody would still be entitled to the Promise Scholarship," Guthrie said this week. "But we might be able to recruit more kids who have more of a financial need and also say to the kids that probably would have gone to college anyway, you can still get at least a third of your college education paid for with this Promise Scholarship, and if you're smart you'll get other scholarships together as well."

Guthrie said more students from higher-income homes have been receiving Promise Scholarships than from low-income homes.

The bill was drawn up after University of Charleston President Ed Welch mentioned to Mahan and Guthrie that he wanted to open up UC's pharmacy school to more local residents, Guthrie said.

"I don't know that it's going to go anywhere," Guthrie said. "I do know that our best and brightest will still be able to stay here, but it may free up more money to encourage kids who may not have the means and the wherewithal but they do have the academic smarts to be able to take advantage of the Promise Scholarship."

The Promise scholarship is already capped at \$4,300 for students who attend private schools such as UC, which have relatively high tuition. Of 956 Promise scholars in private schools, 231 were enrolled at UC; 102 at Alderson-Broaddus College; 14 at Appalachian Bible College; 46 at Bethany College; 33 at Davis & Elkins; 51 at Mountain State University; 28 at Ohio Valley University; 339 at West Virginia Wesleyan; and 112 at Wheeling Jesuit University.

The Daily Athenaeum

"Little good is accomplished without controversy, and no civic evil is ever defeated without publicity."

March 26, 2009

SGA lobbies against PROMISE cap in Charleston

By Melanie Hoffman, Staff Writer

Members of West Virginia University's Student Government Association spent all of Wednesday in Charleston encouraging legislators to petition a bill that would cap the PROMISE Scholarship at \$4,500.

But before SGA arrived in Charleston, officials warned that the requirements for the PROMISE would increase if the legislature does not see the bill through, according to the Associated Press.

That option would hike the minimum ACT composite score from 22 to 24, which would eliminate nearly a third of the high school seniors who landed scholarships for this school year. But an additional increase of the minimum score to 25 the following year would deny PROMISE to nearly 42 percent of this year's scholars.

The bill to cap the PROMISE was proposed about a month ago, and SGA took a firm stance against it, with former SGA Vice President Tommy Napier and Gov. Abby Sobonya creating a petition against it.

The petition encourages legislators to keep their "promise" to West Virginia students.

Although the petition had 194 signatures before SGA departed for Charleston, not every member had signed it. The petition was introduced during SGA's last meeting before Spring Break.

Among those to not sign the petition was President Jason Zuccari. But Zuccari added his signature after he was asked why he did not sign.

"I didn't know if it was just for in-state students or not," Zuccari said. "That doesn't mean I don't support the petition."

Other members blamed their missing signatures on technological problems or just being absent-minded.

"I'm sure it (the petition) has SGA's full support," said Gov. Kyle Hess, who hadn't signed before his trip to Charleston.

Govs. Taylor Richmond and Ron Cheng also did not sign the petition.

Richmond said he did not have a computer. But he added that, by going to Charleston, he showed that he supports it even more.

The petition can be found at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/promise/>.

Despite the bill passing through part of the Senate's Education Committee, SGA members were relieved to have support from members of the House of Delegates.

Tiffany Lawrence, Doug Skaff and Daniel Hall, all "freshmen" House Members, talked to SGA members about their stance against the cap on PROMISE.

Skaff, a former student body president at WVU, said, "PROMISE is important to WVU. It's an opportunity to keep in-state students in West Virginia."

Another issue brought up at the capitol was the Senate bill trying to take away student's scholarships who have two or more alcohol related violations.

Monongalia County Sen. Mike Oliverio opposed the bill, agreeing with SGA members, saying it was too easy to get an alcohol violation in college.

"It's over a five-year period," he said. "That's like if you get an underage in high school, then one night in college you're on High Street (Morgantown) and get an open container violation."

Oliverio also said he's trying to change the bill so it would only include more severe violations such as underage drinking violations and DUIs.

Overall, SGA members seemed pleased with the day's events.

Vice President Whitney Rae Peters said, "This was a good opportunity for new governors to get their feet wet with legislators. I wish more legislators would've been available during the day though."

Ann Berry, the communications director for WVU's Extension Service, said the day went "really good."

Extension Services set up more than 30 booths for different groups with WVU such as individual colleges and different 4-H groups.

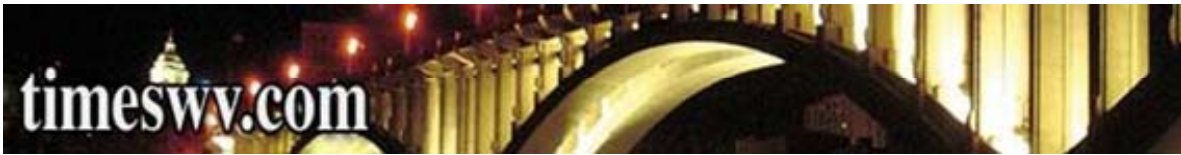
"We had over 700 people in attendance," said Berry. "I'd say there were people from over 45 counties too."

Berry said she felt WVU made a good impression on everyone there.

"I was the happiest to see students there."

Members of legislation felt the same way.

"I'm glad to see students down here getting involved in legislation," Lawrence said. "They had good ideas, and hopefully they'll e-mail me so we can further discuss them."



March 27, 2009

Senate committee alters PROMISE cap Idea 'is to give as much as we can'

By Lawrence Messina, Associated Press Writer

CHARLESTON — A \$4,500 cap on the PROMISE college scholarship would instead be a \$4,750 funding target, after the Senate Education Committee voted Thursday to amend Gov. Joe Manchin's legislation to control the soaring price tag of the merit-based program.

The change sponsored by Chairman Robert Plymale would add \$250 to the bill's proposed limit — but also allow larger awards in the future and without legislation, if revenues improve or recipients decline.

PROMISE now covers tuition and fees at any of the state's public colleges and universities, and an equivalent amount at its private institutions, for up to four years. West Virginia University is the most expensive public school, at \$5,100 annually, and is the choice of nearly 45 percent of PROMISE winners.

"The idea of PROMISE is to give as much as we can," Plymale, D-Wayne, told his committee.

Other successful Plymale amendments would add \$2 million to PROMISE's annual share of lottery proceeds, raising it to \$29 million, and "strongly encourage" the scholarship to tighten its academic criteria even further.

Three times in the last five years, PROMISE has made it tougher for students to land a scholarship. Higher Education Policy Commission officials warn that PROMISE would be forced to raise standards again if the cap bill fails.

But they also say the necessary increases would eventually deny PROMISE to 42 percent of those students now eligible. As amended, the bill urges increasing the minimum composite ACT test score from 22 to 23. That standard would have denied PROMISE to 374 of the high school seniors awarded the scholarship so far this school year.

Plymale cited the state's needs-based scholarships, and how their funding has increased from \$2 million when he first joined the Senate in 1972 to above \$40 million this year.

"Let's remember, this is a merit-based scholarship," Plymale said of PROMISE. "I think that we have taken care of the needs-based kids, and we will continue to ... Raising (PROMISE) standards was something that we all envisioned might happen."

Manchin proposed a cap on the recommendation of a recent commission formed to address PROMISE's soaring costs. Higher Education Chancellor Brian Noland said the

\$4,750 limit, which Plymale termed a “floor,” and Thursday’s other changes are consistent with that study’s findings.

Plymale’s committee sent the amended bill to the Senate Finance Committee. With the session ending April 11, it must pass the full Senate by Wednesday and would then proceed to the House. Plymale’s counterpart there, who took part in the recent study, agreed with Noland that Thursday’s amendments appeared to reflect those findings.

“I like the floor idea,” said House Education Chairwoman Mary Poling, D-Barbour.

Well before the recession threatened revenues for next year’s state budget, PROMISE had sought to arrest its exploding growth. It provided \$10.2 million to its first class of 3,555 students in 2002. It expects to spend \$42.3 million this school year sending 8,993 West Virginians to college.

Booming interest in the scholarships, plus repeated tuition increases, now have PROMISE on track to outstrip current funding levels. Without any changes, it would fall \$1.4 million short during the next school year. That funding gap is projected to grow, and reach \$16 million by 2014.

Plymale said the \$4,750 award “floor” would take effect in 2011, and not affect those students who first win their scholarships before then. Noland cited figures suggesting that the amendment would gradually reverse those shortfalls, and begin improving PROMISE’s balance by 2013.

The \$2 million in extra funding should further offset those projections. A \$4,750 limit would cover current tuition and fees at all but four public schools: WVU, its Institute of Technology, and Shepherd and Fairmont State universities.

March 23, 2009

State program to help 13,000 needy students attend college

By The Associated Press

WILLIAMSON, W.Va. -- More than 13,000 students in 10 southern West Virginia counties could get some help paying for college through 2014.

The WV GEAR UP program also will help students in Boone, Clay, Lincoln, McDowell, Mingo, Roane, Summers, Webster, Wirt and Wyoming counties plan and apply for post-high school training.

The program provides tutoring services as well as assistance with campus visits and applications for financial aid.

Director Adam Green says WV GEAR UP plans to award nearly \$500,000 in financial incentives for students to attend state colleges and universities over the next six years. Those awards are based on need, not academic merit.

The federally funded program is open to all juniors and seniors.

The application deadline is May 1.

March 26, 2009

Magrath may take another job at WVU Interim president may be hired as a consultant

by Ry Rivard, Daily Mail staff

MORGANTOWN, W.Va.--West Virginia University Interim President C. Peter Magrath could stay around a bit longer than expected, even if he's no longer president.

The university's Board of Governors could hire him as a consultant, said Professor Steve Kite, the board's faculty representative.

"The board may discuss asking President Magrath to make himself available as a special assistant to the new president," Kite said. "He has decades of experience. We might as well take advantage of it."

Magrath said he's fallen in love with West Virginia and with the university, and acknowledged he could have a role in its future. But there's no telling what that would be.

"I hope to remain tied in with West Virginia and WVU," Magrath said in an interview Wednesday, which was "WVU Day" at the Legislature. "I don't know what will emerge."

He said he will maintain a deep interest in the university and could continue to participate in various efforts at the university if he is asked.

But Magrath also said he would disentangle himself from running the university and allow James Clements to take over as the university's 23rd president.

Clements, the provost of Towson University in Maryland, was selected March 6 for the university's top job. He is set to start June 30 and will make \$450,000 a year.

Magrath plans to return to work in Washington, D.C. as a senior advisor to the College Board, which manages the SAT test, and continue other consulting work.

Magrath has a lifetime of higher education experience, including time as a lobbyist. He has served as president at three public universities and spent 13 years representing public colleges on the national and international scene as president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

Magrath said he feels good about his eight or so months of work at WVU, though he also credits university faculty and his staff for their work.

Magrath became WVU's president last summer after then-President Mike Garrison left amid a degree scandal involving Gov. Joe Manchin's daughter.

Garrison, a Morgantown lawyer, stepped down after less than a year on the job. He initially was tapped to stay on for several more months as a consultant to WVU, but that plan was heavily criticized and did not materialize. He served only for a few weeks as an adviser to Magrath during the administrative transition last August.

"The late unpleasantness is essentially behind us and the university is moving forward," Magrath said Wednesday.

He said the university budget he leaves Clements, who takes over this summer at the start of the fiscal year, will have "some reductions" but be "less strenuous" than budgets at some other universities. Schools across the country have forced employee furloughs, hiring freezes and program cuts.

For instance, Towson University, where Clements remains provost until he comes to Morgantown in late June, is facing cuts as part of Maryland's public higher education system.

One trim at Towson includes a \$500,000 cut in funding to a \$2 million nursing program at a satellite campus, according to the university's student newspaper, The Towerlight.

In West Virginia, officials are looking at making 4.6 percent in cuts from the state budget, though it's not clear yet what will happen in education spending.

"It will be a challenging budget, but the good news is that the bad news could be worse," Magrath said. "We'll have to do some juggling but we'll be OK next year."

Magrath said that since he came West Virginia he has bonded with superb people at the university and tried to bring leadership to the university and not act as placeholder.

"For me, I'm not just somebody who came and I'm not just a rent-a-president for a year," Magrath said.

The next WVU Board of Governors' meeting is set for April 3 in Morgantown.



March 27, 2009

HSC chancellor search underway

Jonathan Vickers, Staff Writer

The Health Science Center's Chancellor Search Committee is expecting to find several candidates for President-elect James Clements to consider once he takes office June 30.

The committee has hired Witt/Kieffer, a national executive search firm, to help find possible candidates for the position of chancellor, which will replace the current position of vice president held by Dr. Fred Butcher.

Neither Butcher nor representatives at Witt/Kieffer were able to be reached for comment.

The committee changed the title after examining the responsibilities of the position. The committee felt that the responsibilities of the position – which include academic, physical and hospital responsibilities – transcended the term vice president. The committee looked at other university health centers and the titles they used, such as CEO, president and chancellor.

The committee submitted a profile, which can be found on the Chancellor Search Web site (hscchancellorsearch.wvu.edu), to help Witt/Kieffer with the ongoing search for candidates.

"We spent a lot of time in meetings putting together the profile," said Hank Barnette, the chair of the search committee.

Barnette breaks potential candidates down into three groups: Applicants, nominees and discovered or identified candidates. He said that these individuals will have the opportunity to be considered "candidates," and potentially "finalists," if they successfully make it through the searching and interviewing processes.

Barnette explained his hopes for the search process in the upcoming months.

He would like to see candidates chosen within a month or so and narrow them down to those who will be questioned in time for the formal interviewing process in May. It is uncertain how many will make it to these interviews, but Barnette said after the initial questioning, finalists will come to Morgantown for on-campus interviews.

"It is important to have highly qualified candidates who are willing to meet with us and come to our campus," Barnette said. "We need to be able to explain the opportunities found in the position and demonstrate the qualities desired in a candidate."

The committee plans to present suggestions to Clements in June.

“We hope to submit several names to President Clements in hopes to give him several alternatives,” Barnette said.

Interim President C. Peter Magrath, who will be sitting in on the formal discussions at Clements’ request, said that Clements has made some suggestions in regards to possible chancellor candidates to the committee.

Magrath, who may be hired as a consultant by the West Virginia University Board of Governors according to an article in the Daily Mail, is confident in the search and said he has heard nothing but rave reviews.

“The search is well underway,” Magrath said. “They are considering many possibilities. Sometime in June, I expect a list of top prospects for President Clements to select from.”

The committee is not releasing any information about possible candidates at this time in order to protect those candidates’ privacy and current job positions.

“We want to be responsive to the media,” Barnette said. “But we want to protect the confidentiality of the candidates.”

Both Magrath and Barnette are happy with the progress that is being made.

“We are very pleased with the way the search is proceeding,” Barnette said.

News and Sentinel

Parkersburg

March 27, 2009

Gnage: Talks between WVU and WVU-P progressing

By MICHAEL ERB

PARKERSBURG - Members of the West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors gathered Thursday to discuss progress on an agreement with West Virginia University.

Marie Foster Gnage, president of WVU-P, said officials have met twice with representatives from WVU, including once Thursday morning. Gnage said work on the agreement between the two schools was progressing "quite nicely," though few details were available Thursday.

"We want to be as aligned as we can be under the new law," Gnage said. "The discussions are going along quite nicely."

The two schools entered into contract negotiations last week following complaints by the local board over a lack of communication and no contract. Gov. Joe Manchin intervened, asking the two colleges to come to the table to work out an agreement allowing WVU-P to continue to be a part of WVU.

Under legislation passed last year the community college was separated from the state's flagship university and created its own governing board.

The legislation allowed the two groups to continue to work together provided an agreement is in place by the beginning of July.

However, officials with WVU did not respond to numerous letters and other attempts to prompt an agreement, leading to the local complaints.

Board member Keith Burdette also updated members on several bills currently circulating in the state Legislature. One bill introduced by delegates from Fayette County would seek to put the relationships between colleges and community college "back like they were before," though Burdette said he was largely unfamiliar with the specifics of the bill. A second bill would seek to make WVU-P a "division" of WVU, but Burdette said neither bill seemed to have much support.

"I don't think the bill has much legs," he said. "If it has legs, they're short."

The WVU-P board later met behind closed doors to review the contract between the two colleges and give Gnage guidance. The majority of board members attended the meeting via conference call.

In other business, the board welcomed a new board member, WVU-P social studies professor Matthew Santer. Santer replaces Greg Bush who resigned to take a position with Washington State Community College as the dean of arts and sciences for that school.

Capstone Team donates \$55,000 to MU Foundation for MIIR

The Herald-Dispatch

HUNTINGTON -- Capstone Development Corp. of Birmingham, Ala., Mascaro Construction of Pittsburgh, Pa., and Brailsford and Dunlavey of Washington, D.C. -- all part of the development/construction/management team for the new Marshall Housing and Recreation Center -- have made a combined \$55,000 contribution to the Marshall University Foundation for the Marshall Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (MIIR) as part of West Virginia's "Bucks for Brains" initiative.

The Capstone Team developed and operates Marshall's First Year Freshman Residence Halls, which opened in August 2008. The team also developed the Marshall Recreation Center, which opened in February. Brailsford and Dunlavey, a facilities planning and program management firm, provided programming services for the Marshall Recreation Center and is also providing management services for the recreation center through its division known as Centers. Mascaro Construction Co. was the general contractor for both the First Year Freshman Residence Halls and the Marshall Recreation Center.

"We always like to give back to our university partners," said Alton Irwin, executive vice president of marketing with Capstone. "The Capstone Team is a long-term partner, and we want to see the Marshall students succeed. We have seen first-hand President (Stephen) Kopp's vision and passion for taking Marshall to the next level, and we are honored to be a part of that vision."

The "Bucks for Brains" initiative, also known as the Research Trust Fund, was passed by the West Virginia Legislature last year. It allocates \$15 million to Marshall University and \$35 million to West Virginia University as a research endowment trust fund to be matched by contributions from each institution's foundation.

The research endowment is modeled after a highly successful program in Kentucky. As envisioned, the principal funds in each endowment will produce interest income for each account and fund research grants in specialized fields such as biotechnology and biometrics. The goal is for the universities to create new spin-off businesses and high-paying jobs as research results in breakthroughs, patents and products.



March 25, 2009

Making an impact

FSU candidate Hoffman stresses cooperation, communication

By Katie Wilson, Times West Virginian

FAIRMONT — Fairmont State University's presidential forums have begun, bringing the campus on the hill one step closer to choosing a new chief.

Dr. Sharon Hoffman visited FSU Tuesday, getting the opportunity to check out the campus, while giving the campus community a chance to get to know her.

Hoffman spoke and answered questions in five different forums Tuesday, all designed to let different pieces of the FSU community ask questions of the woman who may be the next president.

Hoffman is currently the provost and vice president for academic affairs at Clayton State University in Morrow, Ga.

Her message to community members and alumni at the first forum of the day was communication and cooperation.

Hoffman fielded questions on a variety of subjects, from the role of a university in the community to fundraising. She encouraged community involvement as a two-way street: the university hosting events to invite the community in and the university staff and students participating in community activities.

"The university has a huge impact on the community, and the community has a huge impact on the students," Hoffman said.

She also discussed a plan to diversify the campus by actively recruiting minority students and faculty as well as encouraging international student registration.

Hoffman said fundraising is very important, and she believes the next president will spend more than a quarter of his or her time actively fundraising. In her current and past jobs, Hoffman has brought \$10 million to her universities and has participated in raising \$300 million overall.

She also fielded questions about the unique relationship between FSU and its sister institution, Pierpont Community & Technical College, as well as the relationship between FSU and the larger school to the north, West Virginia University.

Hoffman said the relationship between FSU and Pierpont should be considered a partnership created to benefit the students.

"One hand must shake the other," Hoffman said. "It behooves everyone to make sure the student isn't disadvantaged."

As far as WVU goes, Hoffman said FSU should work with its strengths to differentiate itself from its neighbor. Cooperation is important, she said, and there is a niche FSU can fill with student in the region and in surrounding states as well as other countries.

“You go to FSU when you want a teacher/student ratio of 17 to one,” Hoffman said. “You go to FSU when you want to be taught by faculty instead of graduate students. Fairmont State’s professors can call their students by name. You make an impact by talking about the differences.”

FSU has been searching for a new president since last July when former President Dan Bradley left to become the president at Indiana State University.

Last week, the FSU presidential search committee announced three names in contention for the top post.

The presidential forums will continue today with Dr. Charles F. Harrington, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, professor of economics and finance and university honors faculty at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in Pembroke, N.C.

He will speak at the following times in the conference rooms on the third floor of FSU’s Falcon Center.

- 8:30 - 9:15 a.m. Community and alumni.
- 9:45 - 10:30 a.m. FSU classified and non-classified staff.
- 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Presidential search committee and FSU Board of Governors.
- 1:15 - 2 p.m. FSU students.
- 2:30 - 3:15 p.m. FSU faculty.

An announcement of the identity of FSU’s new president is expected Friday.



March 27, 2009

'Collaboration and progress' FSU candidate Krepel has diverse background in higher ed

By Katie Wilson, Times West Virginian

FAIRMONT — Fairmont State University's new president could be named today.

The presidential selection process entered its final course Thursday when Dr. Thomas Krepel, the final candidate for the job, spoke on campus.

Krepel currently serves as assistant to the president of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Ill.

From 1997 until 2005, Krepel was president of Chadron State College in Chadron, Neb. Thursday, Krepel explained his current position has been described by NIU's president as "chief of staff" or "deputy president." Krepel said he left the presidency at Chadron because he was unhappy with changes made to the state college system in Nebraska. Also, Chadron had about 2,500 students, while NIU is about 10 times larger, he said.

Krepel has served in different capacities during his career. He left a job as a middle school social studies teacher to go into business with his father as a meat cutter. After that, he became a lobbyist and eventually moved into higher education administration. He's worked with every group with an interest in higher education, from business and industry to politics, education and the local community.

With that experience, Krepel said he's well-versed in politics. He said one of the keys to increasing legislative funding is to explain the difference between spending money and investing money to legislators.

Krepel also spoke about the importance of alumni to an institution. He said they help enhance an institution by helping with enrollment, funding and legislative issues. As far as the separation between FSU and its sister institution, Pierpont Community & Technical College goes, Krepel said he has good experience creating positive relationships between community colleges and four-year institutions. During his time at Chadron, he enhanced relationships with community colleges both in-state and out.

"It's all about making thing easier for students," he said. "You need to understand the students' perspective."

Most likely, FSU and Pierpont students don't see that there are two schools, he said.

Krepel said he needs more information on the background of the relationship between FSU and Pierpont to get a good grasp on the specific situation. He did say working together benefits everyone because legislators and policy makers don't want to referee fights between institutions.

“They want to see collaboration and progress,” he said.

Krepel's was the third and final in a series of forums held on campus this week. The forums began with Dr. Sharon Hoffman and continued with Dr. Charles Harrington before finishing up with Krepel.

The FSU presidential search committee will meet at 10 a.m. today to make their choice between the three candidates and forward a recommendation to the university's board of governors, who will meet at noon. That group will vote to authorize BOG Chairman Andy Kniceley to negotiate a contract with the selected candidate pending approval of the Higher Education Policy Commission. As it did with the West Virginia University presidential search, the HEPC will schedule an emergency meeting to act on the board of governors' request for approval.

Fairmont State's presidential search began last July when former President Dan Bradley left to become the president of Indiana State University.

Early in the search process, the FSU governing board chose the Parker Executive Search firm to assist with the search process. Dr. Charles McClain has served as the interim president since August.

For more information about the FSU presidential search, the university has a Web site dedicated to the search process at www.fairmontstate.edu/presidentialsearch.



March 22 2009

FSU's new president to be named this week

By Katie Wilson, Times West Virginian

FAIRMONT — Fairmont State University's new president will be named this week.

That will put to rest a question that's been in the air since last July, when former President Dan Bradley left to become the president at Indiana State University.

Last week, the FSU presidential search committee announced three names in contention for the top post.

They are:

- Dr. Charles F. Harrington, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, professor of economics and finance and university honors faculty at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in Pembroke, N.C.
- Dr. Sharon Davidson Hoffman, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Clayton State University in Morrow, Ga.
- Dr. Thomas L. Krepel, assistant to the president of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Ill.

Interim President Charles McClain was part of the group that met with five semifinalists the week before.

McClain said he believes the three are all well matched, down-to-Earth, and would be a good fit for the Friendly City.

"I got to meet them, speak with them and hear their presentations," he said. "I think they'll be very much at home in West Virginia."

McClain said this is shaping up to be an exciting week for FSU.

"There's a great possibility of getting someone talented, someone to bring a new level of excellence to the university," he said. "They can build on what we've already got to reach higher."

Harrington, Hoffman and Krepel will go through some big job interviews this week. Each of them will come to campus for a day to meet hundreds of people, from community members and governing board members, to students, faculty and alumni. The meetings will all take place as forums on FSU's main campus. Each of the forums is designated for different constituency groups, so all facets of the FSU community will have the opportunity to meet the candidates and get their questions answered.

Hoffman will arrive on Tuesday, Harrington on Wednesday and Krepel on Thursday.

All forums will take place in the third-floor conference area of the Falcon Center. The schedule will be as follows:

- 8:30 - 9:15 a.m. Community and alumni.
- 9:45 - 10:30 a.m. FSU classified and non-classified staff.
- 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Presidential search committee and FSU Board of Governors.
- 1:15 - 2 p.m. FSU students.
- 2:30 - 3:15 p.m. FSU faculty.

On Friday, the presidential search committee will meet for a final time at 10 a.m. and make its recommendation to the university's board of governors, who will meet at noon.

The BOG will vote to authorize Chairman Andy Kniceley to negotiate a contract with the selected candidate pending approval of the Higher Education Policy Commission. As it did with the West Virginia University presidential search, the HEPC will schedule an emergency meeting to act on the board of governors' request for approval.

An announcement of the identity of FSU's next president is expected later Friday.

March 24, 2009

Competing With Publics on Price

By Doug Lederman

With each passing day, as the economy turns down and Americans' financial uncertainty ramps up, the competitive environment for higher-priced colleges grows tougher. They will continue to make longstanding arguments about their relative quality compared to less-expensive competitors, particularly when factoring in the likelihood that students will get through in a shorter time period. And they will make the point that the gap in the actual price of attending is a lot narrower than the difference in sticker price. But in a world of simple messages, higher prices are still a hurdle.

Advertisement In recent weeks, two private colleges have introduced or expanded programs in which they match the tuition price of local or regional public universities for some portion of the potential applicant pool. Their reasons for doing so are different -- California Lutheran University is very directly trying to take price out of the equation for a group of high-quality students, while officials at Davis & Elkins College say they are focusing on making higher education a more viable option for place-bound students in their Appalachian West Virginia region.

But in both cases, the colleges hope that a simple message -- quality private higher education at a public college price -- will get through the information clutter and financial jitters of this era.

"This allows us to very directly compete on price and have a very direct conversation about what it takes to get an education like the one we offer," says Matthew Ward, vice president for enrollment management and dean of admission at California Lutheran, which expanded to transfer students for 2009-10 its year-old program -- none-too-subtly titled "CLU Guarantee Scholarship: Private Education, Public Price" -- that matches the price for students admitted to the University of California's nearby campuses at Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. "For those students, we want to take price out of the equation."

In the highly competitive environment of Southern California, Cal Lutheran is fighting for many of its best students with UCLA and UC-Santa Barbara, which cost students about \$16,000 less to attend (about \$25,000 vs. Cal Lutheran's \$41,000). "We're trying to reach out to students who are interested in a flagship public," says Reed. "The quality of those institutions is something we want to get our names in the same conversation with."

In late 2007, Cal Lutheran announced that it would let any freshman student admitted to one of the two nearby UC campuses enroll at the university "for the cost of attending the public university." Twenty of the 25 students who applied to Cal Lutheran under the program wound up enrolling, and of those, 11 were first-generation college students, and 11 were Latino. That is no coincidence, Reed suspects.

"When you're working with families that don't have a tradition of going to college, and particularly, in the case of Latinos, groups that are averse to debt, it was really helpful to have a simple message making it clear to families what we're putting on the table," he says. "We're saying, 'If you get in there, you can pay the same cost here. The quality of the education at CLU is going to be higher, and we're going to do a better job preparing you for your next step in life.' Taking price out of the equation seems to have made a difference."

Most of the students qualifying for the grant would already have qualified for almost as much institutional financial aid from California Lutheran under normal circumstances, so the university absorbed little additional cost in creating the scholarships. "We were just repackaging what is reality" for the most part, Reed says.

California Lutheran officials are uncertain how many more scholarships they are likely to award when they expand the program to transfer students. There is a natural cap on the size of the program because of the selectivity of the institutions the university is competing against -- transfer students must have attained a 3.0 transferable grade point average and completed 60 transferable units at one of the two UC institutions. But Cal Lutheran hopes to benefit from the fact that it is growing (opening a new residence hall, etc.) at a time when the University of California is talking about capping if not cutting its enrollment.

Access in Appalachia

The broad outline of Davis & Elkins College's "Highlands Scholar" program is roughly similar to California Lutheran's approach. It, too, will discount tuition by more than \$14,000 to match the price that a student would pay at two West Virginia public institutions, West Virginia University and Fairmont State University. (This being West Virginia instead of Southern California, though, the dollar figures are much lower: The discount comes off Davis & Elkins's roughly \$26,700 annual sticker price, as opposed to Cal Lutheran's \$41,000.)

But while college officials are clearly positioning the institution in contrast to the nearby publics, they insist that aspects of the program make clear that access, not competition, is their goal. The seven-county area that surrounds the college is a relatively depressed, former coal mining region from which the college traditionally draws only a handful of students. (Last year the college had no freshmen from the region, while two years ago it enrolled seven.) Some locals travel the 110 miles to Morgantown, where the state flagship is, but many in the area do not go to college at all.

Davis & Elkins is making the lower tuition rate available only to students from the 10 high schools in the seven-county area, with the idea that "it is enabling people to come to college and get a very individualized educational experience, as opposed to having either no opportunity or one that was at considerable difficulty for them," says G.E. (Buck) Smith, the college's president. "We see this as a way to reach out to reach out to people in ways that they might never have had the chance before."

So far, 30 students from the area have submitted deposits at Davis & Elkins through the scholarship program, part of a general pattern of enrollment growth at the college that Smith says makes the reduced-tuition scholarship idea workable in a way that it might not be at other private institutions, where cutting prices might require a drop in quality. The college is on its way to growing from about 600 students to nearly 1,000, aiming to

March 24, 2009

Why College Towns Are Looking Smart

By KELLY EVANS

Looking for a job? Try a college town.

Morgantown, W.Va., home to West Virginia University, has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the U.S. -- just 3.9% -- and the university itself has about 260 job openings, from nurses to professors to programmers.

"We're hurting for people, especially to fill our computer and technical positions," says Margaret Phillips, vice president for human relations at WVU.

Of the six metropolitan areas with unemployment below 4% as of January, three of them are considered college towns. One is Morgantown. The other two are Logan, Utah, home of Utah State University, and Ames, Iowa, home of Iowa State University. Both have just 3.8% unemployment, based on Labor Department figures that are not seasonally adjusted.

The pattern holds true for many other big college towns, such as Gainesville, Fla., Ann Arbor, Mich., Manhattan, Kan., and Boulder, Colo. In stark contrast, the unadjusted national unemployment rate is 8.5%.

While college towns have long been considered recession-resistant, their ability to avoid the depths of the financial crisis shaking the rest of the nation is noteworthy. The ones faring the best right now are not only major education centers; they also are regional health-care hubs that draw people into the city and benefit from a stable, educated, highly skilled work force.

The big question hanging over these communities is whether their formula for success can outlast the nation's nastiest recession in at least a quarter-century. Amid investment losses and state budget woes, many college cities are starting to see their unemployment rates rise, even though they're still lower than the national average. The longer the recession drags on, the more likely college towns are to catch up with their harder-hit peers.

They already have felt the impact of the recession. WVU saw its endowment fall by nearly a quarter in the second half of 2008, and its hospitals are reducing 401(k) matching contributions and delaying \$20 million in capital spending, though its state funding has remained intact.

State Funding Cuts

Utah State University has seen nearly 10% of its state funding cut in the past six months, and in response has laid off about 20 employees and imposed a mandatory weeklong furlough for its employees during spring break to save costs. Iowa State,

facing a 9% reduction in state appropriations, just received approval to begin an early-retirement program.

But for now, at least, job seekers who act quickly -- and are willing to relocate -- could well fare better in places like Morgantown, which is about 70 miles south of Pittsburgh near the Pennsylvania border. College towns like Morgantown have a distinct advantage over many other cities: They enjoy a constant stream of graduates, some who stay put and others who return years later -- and each year brings a new crop of students and potential residents to the area.

"I could go almost anywhere and get a job right now," says Shane Cruse, a senior in the WVU school of nursing who graduates in May, citing the shortage of nurses nationwide. But come June 1, he'll be starting as a registered nurse at WVU's Ruby Memorial Hospital.

"I love it here," Mr. Cruse says. "It's a large-enough city that there's plenty to do. But you still leave your house and feel like it's your hometown."

WVU has a current enrollment of nearly 29,000, about the same size as the city of Morgantown, though the metro population is now about 115,000 and draws thousands more daily from the surrounding region for health care, shopping and WVU athletic events.

Today, the university and its hospital system together employ nearly 12,500 people -- the largest employer in the whole state. Job growth in the Morgantown metropolitan area averaged 3.2% a year from 2002-07, according to the university's Bureau of Business and Economic Research, compared to growth of just 1.1% nationally and 0.7% in West Virginia. The university system in total has an estimated annual economic impact of about \$3.9 billion statewide.

Highly Skilled Work Force

Economists credit a highly skilled work force for the resilience of college towns. Edward Glaeser, an economics professor at Harvard University, has demonstrated that as the share of the adult population with college degrees in a city increases by 10%, wages correspondingly rise by about 7.8%.

"Apart from weather, human capital has been the best long-run predictor of urban success in the last century," Mr. Glaeser says.

Nikki Bowman, a 1992 graduate of WVU, is the kind of person economists have in mind when they speak of "human capital." She spent years in the magazine industry in places like Chicago and Washington, D.C., before returning last year to start her own magazine, WV Living, which was launched in November.

"It was my dream to come back, and I knew I could make it work," says Ms. Bowman, 37. "Part of why I wanted to be here was to pull from the journalism school and I have a lot of great interns as a result," which helps keep her payroll costs down.

WVU graduate Lindsay Williams, 29, started work as a real-estate broker with Howard Hanna's Morgantown office shortly after leaving WVU while waiting for her then-

boyfriend -- now her husband -- to finish his degree. She now serves as president of the Morgantown Board of Realtors.

Another factor helping college towns: "communiversity," the current term for partnerships between universities and their home cities, such as joint economic development projects. The trend also reflects a shift in education to increasingly emphasize out-of-classroom learning, such as internships and volunteer work, that by definition engages the community, according to Sal Rinella, president of the Society for College and University Planning in Los Angeles.

"We could actually call these town-gown partnerships a kind of new movement in American higher education," he says. "In the last 20 years or so, the boundaries between the cities and the universities have really begun to crumble."

Planning experts point to the successful relationships between the University of Pennsylvania and downtown Philadelphia, and Johns Hopkins University's multimillion-dollar partnership with the East Baltimore Development Corp. But the college-town effect has its greatest impact in places like Morgantown.

The close relationship between Morgantown and WVU was partly borne out of desperation. In 1991, a young, reform-minded group including Ron Justice, who is now the mayor, was elected to the city council at a pivotal moment; the decades-long decline of railroad and heavy industry in Morgantown meant the city urgently needed to find a new engine of growth.

The council hired a city manager to oversee municipal finances, and began working more closely with the WVU administration in a joint effort to turn the town around. They started out small, with road-paving projects and public safety. In 2001, the university relocated a major new administration building in the city's blighted Wharf District instead of its downtown campus.

Catalyst for Redevelopment

The new building became a catalyst for redevelopment of the whole waterfront. A new hotel, restaurants and a \$28 million event center have since been built, and the old railroad tracks are now miles of jogging and biking trails.

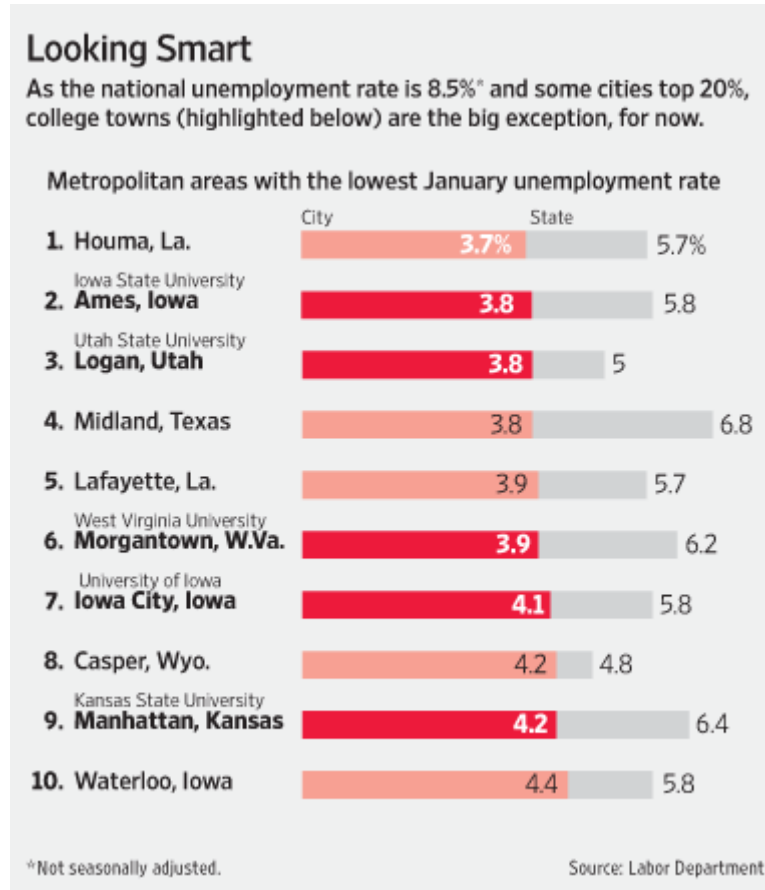
The university has continued to upgrade its downtown campus and added new facilities like a \$34 million student recreation center with two pools, a climbing wall and a café to its campus a few miles north of town. Construction is now under way on an 88-acre research park near the hospital and a \$50 million commercial development featuring a Hilton Garden Inn.

At the same time, WVU president David Hardesty's aggressive expansion of the university's student body -- which has grown 50% since 1995 -- and program offerings in the 1990s, including a world-renowned forensics and biometrics program, helped raise the caliber of the city's work force.

Jason Donahue graduated from WVU in 1993 and followed a career in commercial real-estate development to a job with ECDC Realty in Charleston, S.C., whose primary business is site selection and development for Wal-Mart Stores Inc. He moved back to Morgantown in 2007 to handle development in the Pennsylvania region. "My wife would

tell you I picked our house so we could be within walking distance to the football games," he said with a chuckle. They are now season-ticket holders.

His wife, a registered nurse, quickly found work at one of the city's senior centers. Their 7-year-old daughter was in a community play last weekend sponsored by WVU -- a production of "Alice in Wonderland." "She was Gardener No. 7 with two speaking lines, and she did great," Mr. Donahue says.



But for now, at least, job seekers who act quickly -- and are willing to relocate -- could well fare better in places like Morgantown, which is about 70 miles south of Pittsburgh near the Pennsylvania border. College towns like Morgantown have a distinct advantage over many other cities: They enjoy a constant stream of graduates, some who stay put and others who return years later -- and each year brings a new crop of students and potential residents to the area.

add 100 students a year, and the students added through the tuition lowering program -- about 30-35 a year -- would require the college's student-faculty ratio to grow only to about 11-1 from the current 10-1.

The fact that Davis & Elkins also has extra capacity in its residence halls for those who choose to live on the campus means that the discount will have little if any impact on the college's bottom line. "And while there's a benefit here of roughly \$15,000 for each student, from our economic point of view, they are still bringing with them \$5,000 we wouldn't have had otherwise," says Smith.

"I had to make sure that this doesn't work to the economic disadvantage of the college, and it doesn't," the president says. "We're doing this primarily as a way to help enhance the future of this region and its residents, but there's nothing soft-headed about it. We've been part of this community, been sustained by this community, and now we're at this time where many of the citizens of this area need us."