



West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Higher Education
News Clippings

Week of April 12, 2009

April 13, 2009

'Stability and Permanence'

MetroNews, Charleston, Kanawha County

It's about stability and permanence.

That's how Higher Education Chancellor Brian Noland describes the Promise Scholarship bill that is now awaiting Governor Joe Manchin's signature.

The Legislature approved the bill this past weekend shortly before the end of the regular legislative session on Saturday night.

"The program can now move past the perpetual discussions on standards and we can put that one behind us and start to look at financial aid, both need based and merit based, rather than the discussions we've had for the better part of five years on what are standards going to have to move to," Noland says.

The legislation will cap the scholarship award at \$4,750 starting in 2010, but leaves all of the existing requirements, including the ACT score needed, at current levels.

"It takes off the table the perpetual discussions related to increasing eligibility standards and it sets forth a set of criteria so that students that are in the eighth grade and the ninth grade can begin to plan." It's something future college freshmen will be able to bank on.

The state will fund the Promise with \$45 million, most from limited video lottery money, in 2010, \$48 million in 2011 and \$47.5 million in 2012.

The change to a cap on the award, which means the scholarship will not cover full tuition and fee charges at a number of West Virginia schools, will not impact current Promise Scholars or those who will graduate high school next month and attend college starting this fall.

Estimates put the number of Promise Scholars in West Virginia at about 8,800 students right now. Roughly half of them are attending classes at West Virginia University.

April 11, 2009

Compromise Reached on Promise Bill

By Staff State Capitol

A compromise has been reached on a bill that would put a funding level in place for the Promise Scholarship.

The bill passed with less than an hour to go in the regular session on Saturday night. It was a compromise version of the bill that came out of a House-Senate Conference Committee.

The amendments by the House to delay a new award funding floor of \$4,750 until the graduating class of 2010 remained in the final version of the bill. The measure also does not change the ACT requirement.

House Education Committee Chair Mary Poling says this ensures lawmakers aren't pulling the rug out from under this year's graduating seniors. "Students who are right there applying for college, they've already qualified for Promise. It was important for them to have the full tuition expectation," Delegate Poling said Saturday.

When the cap is enacted in 2010, the scholarship will no longer cover the full cost of tuition at WVU, Marshall, Fairmont State or Shepherd. Critics of the move say this will break a the original promise made under the Wise Administration that any student meeting the requirement would receive a full tuition paid trip to college.

But Poling says she hasn't heard those concerns from the public.

"I don't hear as much demand to maintain this 'magic Promise,'" Poling said. "They want some kind of a scholarship there for merit. I think this will be accepted by the public."

Estimates put the current amount of Promise Scholars at 8,800 with nearly half of them, 4,200, at WVU. Those students will not be affected by the changes.

State looks to scientific research to solve problems, generate jobs

By Erica Peterson

The biennial West Virginia Science, Technology and Research Symposium provides a look at what the state's brightest minds are working on.

The posters lining the ballroom of a Charleston hotel aren't exactly written in layman's terms. They have titles like "Kaempferol Inhibits Expression of VEGF in Prostate Cancer Cells" and "The Omega-3 Fatty Acid Content of Krill Protein Concentrate Influences Tissue Deposition, Oxidation and Metabolism in Young Rats."

However, when you talk to the people behind the posters, or rather beside them, you find out that their discoveries hit close to home.

Briana Vecchio is a WVU junior, whose studies could help soldiers and civilians in war zones.

"My project is about detecting Trinitrotoluene the explosive for use in bio-sensing devices," she said. "So what we're doing is detecting the explosive with DNA molecules which actually fold into a structure which attaches to the TNT. We can incorporate these into biosensors for use by military personnel in the field."

Basically, Vecchio explains, right now there's no very good way to detect these explosives in the field. The detectors that currently exist are large and bulky. So her project involves using DNA in a portable device that will act as a sensor for the explosive.

Though Vecchio's title at first sounds very theoretical, the project itself seems very practical.

Many of the projects at this year's West Virginia Science, Technology and Research Symposium address very specific problems. One poster outlines research on removing selenium—an element released by mining—from wastewater. Another studies chronic kidney disease in Appalachian adults.

"I think a lot of people now are really focused in on the more difficult problems we face in a changing world, said Houston Hawkins, Director of the Department of Defense Programs at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. He's at the symposium to speak on a panel addressing security and intelligence research.

"I think having the intellect, say, of a scientist address problems that are important to us as a race, a species, is something you can never under evaluate."

Kerri Phillips, a WVU graduate student studying aerospace engineering, agrees. Her project is practical as well—she's developing computer programming to aid pilots in the

event of sensor failures. She says the de-emphasis on research that's purely theoretical isn't something that's necessarily going on at all research institutions.

"I've worked at both NASA and Boeing, and seeing students from other schools, West Virginia definitely provides a unique perspective," she said. "We do a lot of lab working at WVU, and so we bring something extra to the table. A lot of other schools from different states are more theoretical sometimes. West Virginia is a great place for research.

"If you look around the poster competition here today, so much research is going on, it's great."

For those minds behind the STaR Symposium, the 32 posters lined up in the ballroom could translate into economic development as well as the answers to the region's most pressing problems.

Paul Hill is vice-chancellor for science and research at the Higher Education Policy Commission, one of the event's sponsors.

"It turns out that 75 percent of all companies that start up, start up within the same general region, stay in the state where the research was done," Hill said. "They want to be near so they can go back and if a product that they're making is not quite right they can continue to get it right.

"So the trend is really good that those companies will start here and stay here in West Virginia if we do more research that stimulates that kind of enterprise in the state."

For Hill the equation is simple: the more money that goes into research, the more West Virginia benefits from new companies and products.

And the amount of money has grown. In 2001, \$35 million in competitive research funding flowed into West Virginia's campuses. Now, the amount is up to \$93 million a year.

April 15, 2009

GEAR UP has \$500,000 available for state students at 16 high schools

By Davin White, Staff writer

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Students at 16 high schools in central and Southern West Virginia can receive up to a \$3,300 boost for their first year in college or training school.

West Virginia GEAR UP, a federally funded grant program, has \$500,000 available this year to assist college-bound students. GEAR UP officials hope to get the word out to as many students as possible -- the deadline to apply is May 1.

"We're definitely looking for more [students] because the money's there so we'd like to get rid of it," said Jessica Kennedy, communications specialist for the program. "Our fear is sort of missing one or two kids."

Eligible students will receive at least \$200 to help pay for their first year of college or training. Depending on a student's financial need, some will receive up to \$3,300.

"If they can get into the college, they can get the money from us," Kennedy said.

The incentive award is one part of West Virginia GEAR UP's mission, whose coordinators also help high school juniors and seniors learn more about financial aid programs. Coordinators will also talk to the teens about higher education and career options available and how to apply for college.

West Virginia GEAR UP coordinators will focus much of their energy on this year's seventh-grade students in parts of 10 counties. Students in the Class of 2014 will work closely with tutors and mentors, and many will be introduced to a college campus for the first time, said Adam Green, director of West Virginia GEAR UP.

GEAR UP works in parts of Boone, Clay, Lincoln, McDowell, Mingo, Roane, Summers, Webster, Wirt and Wyoming counties. Some students in Clay, Roane, Lincoln and McDowell are also eligible for extra grant money that's part of an older GEAR UP program, Kennedy said.

In late 2007, when Green wrote the GEAR UP grant, at least half the students in the 16 high schools were eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

"And these truly are high-need counties," Green said.

The 16 high schools are: Big Creek in McDowell County, Burch in Mingo County, Clay County High, Gilbert in Mingo County, Jaeger in McDowell County, Lincoln County High, Matewan in Mingo County, Mount View in McDowell County, Roane County High, Sherman in Boone County, Summers County High, Tug Valley in Mingo County, Webster County High, Westside High in Wyoming County, Williamson High in Mingo County and Wyoming County East.

Students can use the incentive at any four-year public or private college in West Virginia or a two-year school or community and technical college.

They can also use the money for classes at proprietary institutions such as Everest Institute, West Virginia Business College or West Virginia Junior College.

The application deadline is May 1, and students can apply for the incentive awards at: www.wvgearup.org. College-bound students must also submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form by May 1.



April 14, 2009

WVU will raise tuition By up to 4%; state expects to trim funds

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

WVU will have to increase tuition — perhaps by as much as 4 percent in 2009-'10 — due to a decrease in state funding, interim President C. Peter Magrath said Monday.

The exact amount of the increase will depend on how much money WVU receives in the state budget, which hasn't been determined. Officials have indicated that WVU's allocation from the state could be cut by 2 to 5 percent, Magrath said at a WVU Faculty Senate meeting Monday.

"They're thinking right now that it won't be a huge cut, but there will be a reduction. Then we have to put together how we close the gap," Magrath said.

The 2009 legislative session ended Saturday, but lawmakers will reconvene May 26 to consider the state budget. WVU received about \$205.2 million from the state in 2008-'09 — about 25 percent of the university's \$823.2 million in overall funding.

Tuition accounts for the largest portion of WVU's revenue — about \$271.3 million, or 33 percent, in 2008-'09.

Magrath said WVU will be prepared to finalize its budget quickly once the state numbers are approved. "A modest tuition increase" for both in-state and out-of-state students will likely be factored into the budget and presented to the WVU Board of Governors for consideration in June, he said.

"I'm hoping we can hold it at no more than 4 percent, and right now I'm optimistic we can," Magrath said.

Undergraduate tuition at WVU costs about \$5,100 a year for in-state students and about \$15,768 a year for out-of-state students. A 4-percent tuition hike would increase the cost by about \$204 a year for instate students and \$630.72 for out-ofstate students.

Magrath said WVU will receive additional money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to help bolster WVU's budget this year, but that's only one-time revenue. A tuition increase will help WVU offset the loss in state revenue and avoid a more dramatic tuition hike in the future, he said.

"It's not a huge number in context," Magrath said, adding that scholarships, grants and other types of financial aid will be available to help students with the added cost. "We'll still be relatively low for non-resident students who want to come here, even though they pay 2 1/2 times more than West Virginia students."

Tuition increases are expected at most of the state's other colleges and universities, Magrath said.



April 13, 2009

3 registrar finalists chosen

Search panel for WVU provost to be named soon

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

The finalists for WVU's registrar job all have records management experience at comparable schools, search committee chairman and associate provost C.B. Wilson said Friday.

WVU identified Lynn Kohn, registrar for Southern Connecticut State University; Alice Poehls, assistant provost and university registrar at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; and Steve Robinson, registrar for the University of Maryland-Baltimore County, as the top candidates for the position Thursday.

Wilson said there is a wide variety of experience among the applicants.

"The ones that we decided to put on our short list had experience in registrar positions or associate registrar positions at institutions similar to ours or institutions similar in complexity," Wilson said. "If it was a really small institution with only two colleges within the university or something you could do almost by hand, that was not the kind of experience we were looking for."

Interim WVU Provost E. Jane Martin said last week that WVU initially received 25 applications for the position and narrowed the list to four finalists, but a WVU press release indicated that one candidate took another position.

Interviews will be on campus in April and May, but Wilson said they won't be open to the public. The candidates will have an opportunity to meet with the staff at Admissions and Records, as well as the assistant and associate deans who handle record-keeping for each of the colleges at WVU.

"It's a much more focused, almost kind of technical position," Wilson said. "The candidates will want to know what the colleges are doing. The colleges will want to know what the candidates will do, and things like that."

Wilson said the search committee will evaluate each candidate's strengths and weaknesses, but Martin and interim WVU President C. Peter Magrath will ultimately select someone to fill the position.

Wilson said he hasn't spoken to WVU President-elect James P. Clements about the opening, and he's not sure if Clements — who is slated to begin work June 30 — will be involved in the selection process.

Magrath has said WVU plans to choose a registrar this summer and have someone on the job by fall.

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) recommended that WVU hire a registrar earlier this year, following a review

of records management and recordkeeping practices campuswide. A report released last month indicated that WVU had awarded 104 undergraduate and 14 executive MBA degrees from 1997 to 2008 to students who do not appear to meet degree requirements.

WVU had a registrar before 1970, but decided to combine those duties with other jobs in Admissions and Records. The new registrar will be the official custodian of student academic records at the university and report to the provost, another job WVU is working to fill.

Provost search

Magrath said last week that he plans to announce the search committee for the provost position soon. WVU Faculty Senate chairman Nigel Clark said Friday that Magrath has asked him to serve and he's asked the Senate to select five faculty members for the panel.

Faculty Senate members have been asked to volunteer or submit nominations by noon today, Clark said.

The faculty members who serve on the Senate's executive committee will select their representatives later that same day.

"We will do the very best that we can to make certain that we select people who represent the academic diversity of the institution," Clark said, citing research, teaching and health sciences as important interests to consider.

Clark said he's not sure how many people will join the six faculty members on the panel.

April 15, 2009

WVU names provost search committee

By Staff, wire reports

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. -- West Virginia University has formed a 14-person search committee to choose its next provost.

Interim President Peter Magrath says the school is looking for a dynamic, seasoned leader who will serve as not only chief academic officer, but also second-in-command.

The provost must understand the complexities of a university with 15 schools and colleges, plus satellite campuses.

The committee will begin meeting in May and search nationwide for applicants. Incoming President James Clements, who starts work June 30, will make the final selection.

Former Provost Gerald Lang resigned last year over a master's degree scandal involving the governor's daughter. He's fighting WVU's plans for a hearing on whether he committed academic misconduct.

The search chairman will be Rudolph P. Almasy, interim dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences.

In addition to Almasy, members of the committee are: Nigel Clark, Faculty Senate chairman and professor in the College of Engineering and Mineral Resources; Bojan Cukic, associate professor, Lane Department of Computer Science and Electrical Engineering; Alan Ducatman, chair, Department of Community Medicine; Mike Ellington, assistant vice president, Student Affairs; Barbara Foster, senior program administrator/safety director, Department of Chemistry; Donald Hall, Jackson Family Distinguished Chair, Department of English; Kyle Hartman, associate professor of wildlife, Division of Forestry; Georgia Narsavage, dean, School of Nursing; Whitney Peters, Student Government Association; Curt Peterson, vice president, Research and Economic Development; Leslie Tower, associate professor, Division of Social Work and Division of Public Administration; Narvel Weese, vice president, Administration and Finance; and C.B. Wilson, associate provost for academic personnel.

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

April 17, 2009

Herd, WVU differ on football series format

By Jack Bogaczyk, Daily Mail Sports Editor

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- West Virginia University is willing to continue the football series with Marshall University, but only if two games are played in Morgantown for each game in Huntington.

Marshall wants to keep playing the Mountaineers after the current contract expires in 2012, but only if the Herd gets a home game every other year.

In 2005, Gov. Joe Manchin insisted that WVU Athletic Director Ed Pastilong and Marshall Athletic Director Bob Marcum meet at the governor's mansion and come to contractual agreement on a football series between the schools.

Marcum recently sent a letter to Pastilong, expressing the Herd's desire to extend the series on a home-and-home basis.

Pastilong on Wednesday confirmed he received the letter, copies of which went also to Marshall President Stephen Kopp and Manchin.

"Our position has been a 2-for-1 series with Marshall," Pastilong said Wednesday during an interview in his office at the WVU Coliseum.

Marcum, reached by phone Thursday in Lexington, Ky., where he was paying a social call on new Kentucky basketball coach John Calipari, said he called Pastilong last week.

"Ed said we'd get together in a week or so to discuss it," Marcum said.

Told that Pastilong said Wednesday that the Mountaineers wanted a 2-for-1 rather than home-and-home extension, Marcum said, "Well, that's the reason you have negotiations . . . You go into a meeting and you discuss it, but you don't know if you're going to get anything done. You try."

After meeting only once (1997) in more than eight decades, WVU and Marshall signed a seven-year contract in May 2005, with the first game in 2006. The series called for four games in Morgantown and two in Huntington.

The middle game (2009) in the series was to be hosted, through a Manchin concept, by the team that won two of the first three meetings. The Mountaineers have won all three - 42-10, 48-23 and 27-3 - to essentially make it 5-for-2 series.

This year's game will be played Oct. 17 at Mountaineer Field.

WVU leads the all-time series, 8-0, with the first four games played between 1911 and '23.

The 2010 game is scheduled at Edwards Stadium, with the 2011 and 2012 dates back at Mountaineer Field.

One of Marcum's negotiating points will be another piece of WVU scheduling. The Mountaineers tentatively have scheduled a home-and-home series with the Herd's Conference USA brethren, East Carolina, from 2013-18, according to ECU Athletic Director Terry Holland.

"How do you treat other people in our conference differently?" Marcum said. "The main point is how can Marshall accept anything less than home-and-home? What I think is fair is home-and-home."

WVU has played the Pirates 20 times - with a 17-3 series lead - since 1970. This year's game in Morgantown will be the 13th meeting in 15 years. WVU had a 3-for-2 in the last renewal (2005-09).

Asked about the difference between ECU and Marshall, from the same league, Pastilong said, "We have had a particularly long series and relationship with East Carolina, which has been good for both schools."

Marshall also has gotten a home-and-home (2007 and 2008) from one of WVU's Big East foes, Cincinnati, and Louisville has been in discussions with the Herd for a home-and-home.

Marcum has been trying to get 2-for-1 deals with teams from Bowl Championship Series conferences off the Herd schedule.

Marshall has another 2-for-1 to play, with Virginia Tech - at Blacksburg in 2009 and 2013, and in Huntington in 2011. The Herd also has a no-return date at Ohio State in 2010.

The 2007 Coal Bowl game, WVU's first game in Huntington in 83 years, drew an overflow record crowd of 40,383 to Edwards Stadium.

The 2006 and 2008 games at Mountaineer Field also have produced sellouts of 61,077 (the largest home crowd in the Big East that season) and 60,154, respectively.

"If it's good for both schools, we'll have a discussion beyond where the (current) schedule takes us," Pastilong said.

"The difference," Marcum said, "is what they want and what's right."

So far, they agree only to disagree.

April 17, 2009

WVU-P Board to send letter of concern to WVU

By MICHAEL ERB POSTED

PARKERSBURG - The West Virginia University at Parkersburg Board of Governors agreed to send a letter of concern to West Virginia University officials concerning a draft agreement over use of the university's trademark Wednesday, but declined to discuss details of the draft.

The WVU-P board met Thursday evening, immediately voting to go into executive session to discuss draft agreements with WVU. After more than an hour behind closed doors, the board returned to open session where member Keith Burdette via conference call made a motion to send the letter.

The letter, to be sent to WVU officials and copied to Gov. Joe Manchin, will outline "concerns we have with the draft ... trademark agreement," Burdette said, specifically "the limitations of the trademark agreement."

The board unanimously approved the motion without further discussion and shortly after adjourned the meeting. Board President Joe Campbell declined to discuss details of the draft agreement.

"I don't want to throw it out there before WVU's board has a chance to address this," he said. Campbell said administrators from both sides had talked Thursday morning and had created "a very favorable memorandum of understanding."

Campbell also said "negotiations have been cordial" on both sides, but called the discussions "a process."

"We are working on this," he said. "We are moving right along."

"We are meeting on a weekly basis with WVU," said Connie Dziagwa, spokeswoman for WVU-P. "The conversations continue, the discussions continue and we feel we are making progress."

The two schools have been in negotiations since early last month when Manchin stepped in to encourage a memorandum of agreement between the two. Due to a change in state law, the schools have until June 30 to sign an agreement without WVU-P losing its affiliation with the flagship state university.

Campbell said WVU's Board of Governors will meet April 24. The WVU-P board will hold a special meeting April 27, the Monday following WVU's meeting.

"We are going to continue to follow up on this," Campbell said. "It all still comes down to what is going to be the best for this college and campus."

The Daily Athenaeum

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

April 17, 2009

Hearing date for former provost rescheduled

The hearing for former West Virginia University provost Gerald Lang has been rescheduled for April 22 at 9:15 a.m.

This is the second time the hearing has been postponed. It was originally scheduled for March 9, then again for April 8.

Lang filed a petition for a writ of prohibition in February, seeking to halt an academic integrity hearing relating to the Executive Masters of Business Administration degree that was retroactively awarded to Heather Bresch, Gov. Joe Manchin's daughter, while Lang was Provost.

The suit names the WVU Board of Governors, Interim President C. Peter Magrath, Academic Integrity Officer Marjorie McDiarmid and two general counselors as respondents.

Lang claimed that the counselors, who would be involved in the hearing, have a conflict of interest because of their involvement in the Bresch scandal and that the University "arbitrarily and unilaterally" scheduled the hearing when he and his attorney would be out of town.

The respondents filed motions to dismiss the case March 31, which Lang opposed.

Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

April 17, 2009

Byrd helps dedicate MU medical facility to late wife

by Jake Stump, Daily Mail Capitol Reporter

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. -- Sometimes tearful and at other times lively, U.S. Sen. Robert Byrd was the man of the hour as he helped dedicate a new teaching and clinical center at Marshall University's medical school.

The facility, located on 15th Street, was officially unveiled Thursday as the Erma Ora Byrd Clinical Center, named after the senator's late, beloved wife.

Byrd, D-W.Va., arrived at the ceremony with a police escort to more than 100 dignitaries and medical students welcoming him with rock star applause.

A sport-utility vehicle transported Byrd to the event as The John Marshall Fife and Drum Corps band played. The senator, 91, remained in the back seat and waved to the crowd before the vehicle drove off, apparently to a rear entrance to the new building.

Reporters, photographers and spectators then were herded inside. About 20 minutes later, Byrd took the stage in a wheelchair and positioned himself behind a table.

He spoke of the continued need for high-quality health care in West Virginia, the potential of the new clinic and, of course, his dear wife.

"I am very moved by your gesture in naming this magnificent new center after my beloved dear wife, my childhood sweetheart, a coal miner's daughter, Erma," Byrd said gently.

"Your tribute to her on the program, noting that her concern for the education and well-being of others was central to her life, was right on target. Erma was a compassionate soul, and she devoted her entire life to caring for others. That was my Erma."

The school presented him with a small plaque bearing his wife's portrait. The larger version will be on display at the facility.

Kind words spoken about Erma Byrd caused the aging senator's eyes to water and his voice to grow somber.

Yet he showed vigor as he shouted parts of his speech with passion.

As the senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Byrd secured more than \$22 million in federal funding for the construction of the facility.

The building has enabled the medical school to increase its class size by 50 percent. So far, 130 students have utilized the new center.

It is the primary teaching site for second-year medical students and home to the departments of internal medicine and cardiovascular medicine.

"Compassion is what this facility is all about," Byrd said. "George Eliot once asked, 'What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?' Within this center, you are teaching more medical students, training more residents, and providing expanded health care services, all with the goal of making life less difficult for the injured and ailing."

Charles McKown, dean of the Marshall School of Medicine, called Byrd the "heart and soul of the U.S. Congress" and said it was a great day for the Marshall community, with the spring sun out and the senator's presence.

Also making remarks were Marshall President Stephen Kopp and Congressman Nick Rahall, D-W.Va., whose district includes Huntington.

Rahall paid homage to Erma Byrd as he sat next to the senator.

"Since the beginning and surely until the end of times, it is our wives and mothers who often serve as our greatest healers and teachers," Rahall said. "Today we honor such a wife, such a mother, who taught and healed like mothers across West Virginia did this morning and every morning of their lives. She spent almost 69 years in one of the greatest enterprises we know today - making it possible for Robert C. Byrd to serve West Virginia.

"Look around here. Erma Byrd outdid herself."

Erma Byrd died in March 2006. She was 88.

She met her future husband while they both attended Mark Twain Grade School in Raleigh County. They married when they were 19 in 1937, at the height of the Depression.

The day after their wedding, he gave his bride his wallet, which contained several hundred dollars he had saved. Byrd made his wife the head of the family finances that day and the senator never carried a wallet over the years.

Erma Byrd was known for not seeking the limelight. She didn't give her first interview until 1982 - 30 years after her husband was first elected to Congress.

But those who knew her said she had a deep interest in improving areas such as health care and education.

Other namesakes include the Erma Byrd Gallery at the University of Charleston, the Erma Ora Byrd Center for Educational Technologies at Wheeling-Jesuit University, and the Erma Byrd Higher Education Center at Concord University.

There also are scholarship programs at Marshall and West Virginia University named after her.

The new clinic at Marshall has provided for the expansion of the Diabetes Center and the state's only endocrinology training program with the recruitment of four fellowship-

trained endocrinologists, according to a university press release. The gastroenterology section also has been expanded, allowing for the development of a specialized Digestive Diseases Center.

It has provided the students with more opportunity to practice, as well as giving them ready access to medical simulators. The facility serves as the hub for the Virtual Colonoscopy outreach program to southern West Virginia and its mobile medical unit.

Sen. Byrd's involvement in bettering Marshall's medical school dates back to 1973 when he amended an appropriations bill to create the school.

He has recently added nearly \$4 million for Marshall to initiate the Genomic Research Institute, which will attempt to tackle diseases such as Alzheimer's, autism, Parkinson's, diabetes, and cancer.

"Good health is the greatest of all God's blessings," Byrd said.

"Perhaps the elusive cure for cancer or the common cold, or other medical miracles not even conceived at this time will be discovered right here at Marshall."

Classified staff grievance for higher wages continues

By Amanda White

Members of Marshall University's classified staff are taking a grievance to the next level after being denied their level-one grievance requesting the funding of the 2001 salary schedule.

The grievance was heard in front of a committee overseen by Dean of Student Affairs Stephen Hensley on March 13. Mike Dunn, chair of Marshall's classified staff council, and Leonard Lovely, supervisor of mailing services and member of classified staff council, were listed on the grievance.

"We feel that there are pay inequities and that pay policies here at Marshall are not clear, fair and equitable," Dunn said.

According to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability, Marshall classified staff is being paid 94 percent of their 2001 market value. Marshall needs \$1,280,723 to fully fund the schedule.

"It's not right that we're not making wages we were promised before 2001," Lovely said. "If they have a state code that says this is what they should be making, to me that's a promise."

Dunn said the classified staff has been told by Marshall President Stephen Kopp that the university needs 1,000 more students in order to fund the 2001 pay schedule. Lovely, however, said that the current pay schedule does not support a growth in students.

"I think our funding does have an impact on the morale (of the classified staff), and the morale does impact student retention," Lovely said.

At the hearing, employees of the classified staff said they are being paid less than their peers in the non-classified staff and faculty. Lovely said that using the 2001 market value for the classified staff and using the 2009 market value for the other staff groups is a sign of discrimination, but the council did not vote in their favor.

"While the grievants have alleged discrimination, they did not submit specific evidence to support this contention or to specifically prove that the differences are not related to the actual job responsibilities of the employees," said the grievance denial, written by F. Layton Cottrill, Jr., senior vice president for executive affairs and general council.

The next step in the grievance process is level two, in which a moderator will talk to the two parties separately and try to work out a mutual agreement, Dunn said.

Both Cottrill and Kopp were unavailable for interview because of conflicting schedules.



April 17, 2009

MCTC will have to lose Marshall name after split

By Danielle Jordan

Finalization of the separation between Marshall Community and Technical College and Marshall University will result in MCTC losing the Marshall name.

The split was approved at the MCTC Board of Governors meeting held March 12, but with that approval came the stipulation of the Marshall name being removed from Marshall Community and Technical College. Agreement was reached between the two institutions that the name had to be removed by July 1, 2010.

Keith Cotroneo, president of MCTC, said students who are set to graduate this spring will not be affected by the name change.

"Students who are enrolled by June 30, 2010 will still have Marshall on their diploma," Cotroneo said. "After that, Marshall has to be taken out."

MCTC alumni who have the Marshall name on their diplomas will not be affected by the removal either. Cotroneo said it might follow the example of another community college split by legislation to find a new name for MCTC.

"We've talked about using a consultant like Blue Ridge (from Weyers Cave, Va.,) did," Cotroneo said. "The consultant would come in and take surveys from students, faculty and community members."

Cotroneo said the community and technical college is trying to keep the acronym MCTC.

"I think board members recognized the time we've spent branding the name MCTC," Cotroneo said. "We would like to try to keep it."

The West Virginia state legislature split all community and technical colleges from four-year institutions throughout West Virginia in 2001. The passing of House Bill 3215 brought about the split between MCTC and Marshall University.

Richmond Times-Dispatch

April 13, 2009

John Michael Mullen, retired state education official, dies

By Ellen Robertson

John Michael Mullen, who had been a straight-A student throughout high school, went to Georgetown University on a football scholarship, thinking his psychology major would be a stepping stone to medical school.

At graduation in 1965, he found he had the grades to get into dental school, but not medical school, and he didn't want to become a dentist. "It was the only time he didn't have a 4.0," said Andrea Hopkins Mullen, his wife since 1967. "He [had] played around too much."

Switching gears, he chose a career in higher education, with an emphasis in finance.

Mr. Mullen, a former deputy and interim director of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and more recently chief finance officer at the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs, died Thursday in a Richmond hospice.

The 66-year-old Midlothian resident, diagnosed three weeks ago with hemochromatosis, succumbed to liver cancer.

He earned a master of business administration degree from West Virginia University, taught college finance, served as a community college provost and earned a doctorate in higher education from the University of Virginia.

From 1974 to 1998 at SCHEV, the state government's coordinating body for all higher education in Virginia, Mr. Mullen worked closely with all of Virginia's university and community college boards and presidents.

He spent the next three years as vice president of finance at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. From 2001 to 2005, he was chancellor of the newly created West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, an analogue of SCHEV.

"We shared many a foxhole doing battle with institutional presidents and legislators, usually both at the same time," Jim Barton of San Diego, formerly one of Mr. Mullen's most trusted employees at the commission, wrote to Mrs. Mullen.

"The foxhole analogy falls short, because Mike would invariably step in front of any bullets coming my way. He taught me to always have a strategy and to never fear charging the cannons when the time came. That may not be a recipe for longevity, but it certainly is for integrity. Mike had the latter in spades."

A lot of the time, legislators did not like what the soft-spoken Pittsburgh native had to say, his wife said, and that resulted in his decision to retire in 2005.

The morning the moving van pulled up to his new home in Midlothian, he got a call asking him to work at the Miller Center, his wife said. Mr. Mullen oversaw the finances and administrative operations of the center until the end of 2008.

In addition to his wife, survivors include three daughters, Kelley L. Williamson of Midlothian, Heather Dawn Mullen of Chester and Shannon R. MacNamara of Honolulu; and four grandchildren.

A funeral will be held Tuesday at 11 a.m. at the Chesterfield Chapel of Bennett Funeral Home, 14301 Ashbrook Parkway. Entombment will be in Dale Memorial Park in Chesterfield.

April 15, 2009

Johnson resigns from OVU Board to begin national search for replacement

By MICHAEL ERB

VIENNA - James Johnson will be stepping down as president of Ohio Valley University, officials announced Tuesday.

In a press release Tuesday afternoon, Gail Hopkins, chairman of the school's board of trustees, announced Johnson had resigned.

Johnson, a native of Stanton, Texas, who was hired by the university in 2005, said he would resume full-time work as president of The Ethos Leadership Group based in Washington, D.C. Johnson worked full time with the group in the 1990s while it was under a different name and continued to do consulting work for the organization in recent years.

"I'm excited to go full time with them," Johnson said Tuesday. "My wife and I plan to stay in the area. We love Parkersburg and we love the community."

Hopkins declined Tuesday to speak much about Johnson's resignation.

"It is to a certain extent unexpected," Hopkins said. "He did some good things around here, and certainly we wish him well. Right now we are just concerned about getting the search process under way."

Hopkins said board members already were scheduled to meet Saturday and will discuss the issue of appointing an interim president and searching for a new, long-term leader for the university.

Hopkins said Johnson's resignation is effective immediately, so the group will have to move equally as swift.

"We will try to put together a logical plan on how to proceed," he said.

The university had announced in December a five-year extension on Johnson's contract.

"It was a very, very tough decision, but it was one I felt I had this opportunity to go full time into consulting," Johnson said Tuesday. "There are some particular opportunities there and I was afraid the window might close."

"The board of trustees appreciates Dr. Johnson's service to Ohio Valley University," Hopkins said in the release. "During his tenure as president, the institution attained university status, expanded its degree offerings, including the recent addition of a nursing program and a graduate program in education, increased minority enrollment and extended the university's outreach to our region."

Johnson said he wished the university well in its search for a new president.

"My official work is done, but my wife and I love the university and are loyal to the university, and I am willing to help in any way I can," he said.

April 15, 2009

Stotts named interim OVU president

Staff Report

VIENNA Ohio Valley University this morning named a former president as its interim president.

Keith Stotts has been named interim president at the school to replace James Johnson who resigned effective immediately, Gail Hopkins, chairman of the OVU Board of Trustees, said. Johnson announced his resignation on Tuesday.

"The Board of Trustees will begin an immediate national search for a new president," Hopkins said. "In the interim period we are very pleased to announce that Dr. Stotts will guide the University. He has a proven record of leadership at the University, and we are confident in his ability to direct our efforts during this transition."

Stotts began his tenure with Ohio Valley College as president in 1977 and served the institution in that capacity for until 1998. At that time the board of trustees unanimously approved Stotts' appointment as OVC's first chancellor, dedicated solely to the demands of fundraising.

Stotts graduated from Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, in 1955 with a bachelor's in Bible and Biblical Languages. He then attended Harding Graduate School and earned his master's in Old Testament. He has done post-graduate work in psychology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus.

Before taking the office of president at OVC, Stotts served as administrator for Mid-Western Children's Home in Cincinnati. In addition to this, he has served the churches of Christ in Ashtabula and Columbus.

Stotts is a member of the Parkersburg Rotary Club. He is a past member of the board of directors and past chairman of the board of the Mid-Ohio Valley Chamber of Commerce. He is a past president of the West Virginia Association of College and University Presidents and is a member of the Foundation for Independent Colleges.

April 13, 2009

WJU Closer To Offering Master's

By ART LIMANN POSTED

Wheeling Jesuit University has done more than comply with re-accreditation requirements - it now exceeds them and will offer new master's degree programs as a result.

When accepted, the recommendations of a team from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools will allow stipulations on graduate programs in the areas of business and health care to be lifted. And the university will be able to start new master's programs in these areas without individual approval.

"The team's positive decision to recommend to the Higher Learning Commission the lifting of any sanctions on our master's programs is a clear sign of our maturity and trustworthiness as a university in the Jesuit tradition," said WJU President the Rev. Julio Giulietti, S.J.

Academic Vice President Letha Zook said graduate program plans are centering in the areas of health care and business, but other fields could be added later.

"We're looking at a master's in education in the future," she said. "But right now, we do very well in the health care area and we plan to expand that area.

"We plan on adding rehabilitation sciences within a year, and speech therapy," she continued. "We are also planning to add a master's in psychology and a doctor of nursing practice within a year."

WJU has earned the HLC accreditation since 1962. It is a standard policy in higher education to review the accreditation every 10 years. Five basic criteria are used to establish the detailed report that results.

They include the university's mission and integrity, future planning and strategic direction, student learning and effective teaching, acquisition and application of knowledge, and engagement with external constituencies.

The team found no real problems that would inhibit accreditation, and a full report will be made available in a few months.

When complete, the final report will be submitted to the HLC Commission staff liaison, where it becomes the official document of the site team's visit. The commission action will be final in the early fall.

Locked-In Tuition Is a Win for Families but a Tough Sell for Colleges

By BECKIE SUPIANO

Some colleges have tried the strategy only to find it hard to convince families that it will save them money.

Tuition just about always moves in the same direction: up. So wouldn't it be great if students could lock in tuition at their college and know they will pay the same amount for four years?

It seems like a no-brainer, especially now. But some colleges have tried the strategy only to find it hard to convince families that it's a good idea.

That hasn't stopped colleges from trying. The University of Texas at Dallas began its Guaranteed Tuition Rate Plan in the fall of 2007, as a way to "provide simplicity, predictability, and clarity for our students," says Curt Eley, the university's vice president for enrollment management.

Under the plan, incoming students are promised that their tuition and mandatory fees will remain the same for four years from the time they begin their studies. "It takes what I call the inflation risk out of tuition and fees for each individual student," Mr. Eley says. The university even offers the guarantee to students enrolling in Texas community colleges who plan to transfer. Those students sign a document that binds the university to charge them the university's current tuition rate but doesn't obligate them to attend.

The Dallas campus's program began before the economy tanked, but it could be even better for families now. Many households don't expect their incomes to go up in the next year, and it would be especially helpful if their college expenses remained flat.

Strategy Reliant on Growth

Under the plan, the college gets fewer tuition dollars from each continuing student. But Mr. Eley says the university has been able to finance it by substantially increasing its student body through both recruitment and retention. That growth is providing a cushion while the university adjusts to the new tuition model. It would be much harder to start such a program at a college that had already reached full capacity, he says.

Letting students lock in their tuition isn't a new idea, but as the recession pressures families and colleges alike, pricing strategies are particularly important, and many colleges will be trying to think creatively. As colleges contemplate pricing, they must keep in mind not only the actual cost to families but also the perceived cost.

On its face, Texas at Dallas's guarantee is an obvious boon for students and their families. Not only does the program take the guesswork out of what next year's tuition will be, but it also provides savings for students who stay long enough to complete their degree.

Letting students lock in tuition is a great idea in theory, says Kathy Kurz, vice president of the higher-education consulting company Scannell & Kurz. But in reality, it is not so simple for colleges to market.

For the last few years, tuition has increased by an average of 4.5 to 6.5 percent a year, depending on the type of institution. But if a college has a tuition guarantee, it won't have those year-to-year increases. To compensate, colleges must raise tuition significantly from one year's freshman class to the next. An incoming freshman at a college with fixed tuition may find herself paying 12 percent more than freshmen did the year before.

That, Ms. Kurz says, creates a marketing problem. Though families may be set up to save money over the long run with guaranteed tuition, they often don't look past the first-year price tag—which is likely to be higher than that of similar institutions. "The biggest concern is, at least initially, families pay more," Ms. Kurz says. Paying more that first year—even if it means future savings—strikes many families as too risky, she says.

That is especially true this year, as college after college has announced its lowest tuition increase in years. "Colleges, by and large, are having a much smaller rate of tuition increase than any time in the last five or six years," says Robert A. Sevier, senior vice president for strategy at Stamats, a higher-education-marketing company. "It's not the time for a nine-, 10-, 11- or 12-percent increase, which a lot of four-year fixed rates need."

A Retention Tool

For that reason, Texas at Dallas educates families about its program throughout the admissions process, helping them think through the cost of a whole college education rather than focusing on that first year, Mr. Eley says. "I would make the argument to a family, it's great that college X is increasing tuition by 2.5 percent and not 5 percent, but we're raising it 0 percent" for continuing students. "College X isn't making a contractual promise. There's no reason they can't turn around and raise tuition 10 percent next year."

And, Mr. Eley says, the program is primarily designed to encourage retention, making it easier for students to plan for all four years and encouraging them to graduate on time.

Even when families understand the potential benefits, they may be wary of locking in tuition. What if the student transfers or drops out? Officials at Oklahoma City University have noticed that reluctance.

The university also began a tuition guarantee recently, though it operates differently from Dallas's. At Oklahoma City, the program is optional, and those students who enroll in it are charged several hundred dollars a semester more in tuition their first year. Officials there say only 14 percent of students opt in to the program, even though it works out to be a good deal for any student who stays four years.

Other colleges have abandoned tuition-guarantee programs in recent years. Central Michigan University used to offer guaranteed tuition for up to five years, but stopped doing so in the summer of 2008. The program, though popular, had become "a financial

risk to the university," says Steven F. Smith, director of media relations. It was premised on a level of state appropriations that the university no longer can count on, he says. The guaranteed-tuition program at Pace University also ran into trouble. Offering students a flat tuition rate "requires a degree of stability in everything else," says Stephen J. Friedman, the university's president, who was hired after Pace abandoned its program in 2007. Sustaining the guaranteed-tuition program required large year-to-year increases, hitting 19 percent by the end. While he describes the model as "creative," Mr. Friedman says it also was difficult to sell to families.

Mr. Eley admits the marketing isn't easy, but says that for his institution, it is worth it. "It's more work than a typical pricing strategy," he says, "but morally better for families."



April 15, 2009

Goal: Keep young talent Forum tackles ways to fight 'brain drain'

BY TRACY EDDY The Dominion Post

State and area organizations are trying to figure out how to market Morgantown — and West Virginia — to make it more appealing to young adults.

“People leave the state and don’t come back,” said Paul Daugherty, president of Generation West Virginia. “We want to show people they can stay here and be successful after college, or they can come here for the first time, or they can come home.”

Young professionals, community members, city officials, WVU students and university representatives discussed Morgantown’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as what might attract a young professional to the area Tuesday night during a town hall forum at the Erickson Alumni Center.

The recent national attention Morgantown has received for being “recession-proof” is one of its strengths, said WVU student Jackie Gannon.

“What’s the point of leaving?” she said. “There aren’t jobs anywhere else.”

Gannon, a multidisciplinary studies major who will graduate in May, said she hopes to stay in Morgantown.

“I want to stay because WVU has done a lot for me,” she said.

The forum was facilitated by Scott Rotruck, vice president of Chesapeake Energy and former Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce president, and was sponsored by Generation West Virginia and Generation Morgantown.

Daugherty said the organization was founded in 2007 and works to bring young professionals, ages 21 to 45, together to discuss ways the state can “retain, recruit and attract young talent.”

Fighting “brain drain” is one of the organization’s goals, Daugherty said. “Brain drain” refers to “the loss of young, talented individuals,” which is something West Virginia has been dealing with for years.

Generation Morgantown President Ashley Hardesty said about 80 people attended the forum.

“We’d be happy with five people, she said. “We’d be happy with 200 people. Whoever wants to take advantage of the opportunity, we’re happy to see them. We’re giving young professionals a voice by having this forum.”

Mayor Ron Justice, current Morgantown Area Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Ken Busz, WVU Interim Provost Jane Martin and Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-W.Va., all attended.

Rockefeller described Morgantown as a “rocket ship” and said the city is surpassing the state’s other small cities.

“The reason I came here tonight is that I have never before been in a city where young professionals, of all ages, come together to figure out what they’re going to do to make their city better,” he said.

Some of the city’s strengths cited: large employment anchors such as WVU, Mylan Pharmaceuticals and the two hospitals; the perception of Morgantown as a “great place” to live or raise a family because of its culture, its close-knit-community feel and proximity to larger cities such as Pittsburgh; and the resources for entrepreneurs.

The weaknesses: traffic congestion, student rentals cropping up in residential neighborhoods, low salaries and a lack of entrylevel positions for job seekers.

WVU junior Devon Martin, from Philadelphia, said she knows of several people from her area who attended WVU.

“I’ve never once heard of people staying here after they graduated,” she said. “But Generation West Virginia and Generation Morgantown have changed my perspective.”

Martin suggested that the organizations promote themselves more to illustrate that students are staying in the area after they graduate WVU.

Daugherty said Tuesday’s town hall forum was the first of many in the state. Generation West Virginia has six chapters, he said, and each chapter will host a similar forum.

Ideas from each forum are recorded, Daugherty said, and will be used at the state level to make recommendations on how the state can retain, recruit and attract “talent” to West Virginia.

Erica Brown said she came to the forum because she is a young person who lives in Morgantown and she wanted to share her ideas — such as promoting a “music scene,” which is often overlooked. She also wanted to hear what the other participants had to say.

“I’m getting more reasons to convince my friends to move to town,” she said.

April 13, 2009

Fewer Openings in Nursing Field

By KELLY EVANS

Finding a job as a nurse isn't as easy as it used to be.

Tiffany Hamilton will graduate in May from West Virginia University with a bachelor's degree in nursing, but can't find a job in critical care. "We were always told we'd have no problem getting a job," she said, "and here I am, senior year, having a horrible time trying to find one."

Ms. Hamilton, 22 years old, wants to become an anesthesiology nurse, but most graduate programs require at least one year of critical-care work. She began applying for positions in hospital emergency rooms and intensive-care units in December, focusing on the Pittsburgh area, where she grew up -- but hasn't gotten a single offer.

Her experience reflects a departure from years past when the U.S. health industry's rapid growth outpaced the number of nurses entering the field. As of last summer, the nation had a shortage of roughly 125,000 nurses, based on vacancies at hospitals and in long-term care. That is still expected to balloon to 300,000 to more than one million nursing vacancies by 2020. But thanks to the recession, the nursing shortage appears to be waning, at least temporarily.

Long term, there is still a need to replace the profession's aging work force and meet the growing demand for health care -- particularly elderly care, a field that usually has trouble attracting nurses. But as is often the case during tough times, former nurses are re-entering the work force after a spouse loses a job. This time, the health-care industry is hurting, too, resulting in fewer positions for nurses. "It's caused the otherwise severe nursing shortage to abate somewhat," said Bob Livonius, chief executive of Medfinders, an Arlington, Texas-based staffing firm. His agency, which historically has been able to fill only 70% to 80% of employers' open positions, is now filling "in the 90s," Mr. Livonius said.

A recent survey of 658 hospitals by the American Hospital Association found more than half had negative profit margins in the fourth quarter, raising concerns that more layoffs are on the way. SMDC Health System in Duluth, Minn., a large health-care provider in the region, for instance, has laid off 55 workers this year, including about a dozen nurses last month, from its staff of 7,000.

"I feel sorry for new people coming out of nursing school right now because in this area, at least, there's not a lot of jobs," said Carol Gentry, 49, a nurse in Portland, Ore. Ms. Gentry has been a nurse for 25 years, working her way up from the night shift to emergency-room management in Taos, N.M. But when she and her husband moved to Portland last year, she spent several months looking for a similar management job, to no avail. Two hospitals in the area had hiring freezes, while others were slow to make any hiring decisions. She finally accepted a job as a nurse at Legacy Emmanuel Hospital, putting her back on the night shift, and she is supplementing her income on her days off through a staffing company.

Like many who have re-entered the work force, Lesley Shanholtz, 29, was a stay-at-home mom with her two children in Lindale, Texas, until her husband was laid off last month from his job in the oil industry. She has gone back to work full time through NurseFinders, a division of MedFinders, working 12-hour hospital shifts for days at a time to bring home \$1,500 or so a week. "Now he's Mr. Mom and I'm working," she said.

"I see more nurses working now who might have stayed home when times were good," she said.