



# West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

Higher Education  
News Clippings

Week of April 19, 2009

# Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

April 20, 2009

## W.Va. colleges urged to re-examine some degree programs

by The Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. -- Only two of West Virginia's 11 public colleges, Shepherd and West Virginia State universities, have come through a biennial productivity review of degree programs with no recommendations for change.

The Higher Education Policy Commission recommends that each kind of degree produce certain enrollment and graduation averages over a five-year period. Those numbers, while not binding, are intended to help colleges and universities use their resources efficiently.

Mark Stotler, the commission's assistant director of academic affairs, said Monday that only two schools met the goal in every category in the latest review period, from 2003 to 2008. On May 1, the commission will recommend that nearly every college put some programs on probation, meaning they will be reviewed for viability again in four years.

The commission recommends that bachelor's degree programs produce an average enrollment of 12.5 students and five graduates over a five-year period, Stotler said.

Master's degree programs should produce an average of three degrees and an enrollment of six, Stotler said, while doctorate programs should generate an average of two graduates and enrollment of 4.5.

But schools can request their programs be exempt from those recommendations, and Stotler said many, including West Virginia University, have already done that.

WVU requested exemption for all 10 degree programs that were recommended for probation and told the commission it may merge five of them into a biomedical sciences degree.

"None of these degrees cost us anything," Jonathan Cumming, associate provost for graduate academic affairs, told the Dominion Post of Morgantown. "Those courses are all offered by faculty who teach the Ph.D. programs. The coursework is identical."

Stotler said only three or four WVU programs are now recommended for probation, no worse than any other school.

"WVU had the highest number of programs, so of course it had the most recommendations," he said, but other schools may have a higher ratio.

Marshall University initially had six degree programs singled out for further review, Stotler said, "but again, not all of those are now recommended for probation."

If schools do not improve their graduation and enrollment figures by the end of the probationary period, the policy commission can recommend that a school's governing body end the program.

But those recommendations aren't binding, either.

"They can ignore us," Stotler said.



April 20, 2009

## WVU says 'No' to probation State tags 10 low-enrollment grad programs as too weak

BY CASSIE SHANER, The Dominion Post

*WVU HAS REQUESTED an exemption from the productivity review for all 10 programs. — Jonathan Cumming, associate provost for graduate academic affairs.*

The state's Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) has recommended that 10 WVU graduate programs be placed on probation due to low productivity, but university officials said that's not likely to happen.

"There are legitimate reasons for being low-productivity," said Cheryl Torsney, associate provost for academic programs at WVU. "I don't see it as a problem."

Bruce Flack, director of academic affairs for the HEPC, said state officials examined the average number of graduates and students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at all the state's public institutions from 2003 to 2008 to identify low productivity programs.

Ten master's degree programs at WVU — including chemistry, engineering and liberal studies — failed to meet the productivity standards, averaging no more than three graduates and six students per year during the period examined by the HEPC.

The HEPC recommended that those programs be placed on probation for four years and discontinued if the numbers don't improve, but Flack said it's up to each school to take that course of action.

"The real intent is for the institution to strengthen the program, work on recruitment and make sure it's viable," Flack said. "I see it as a positive effort to work with the institution and identify programs that aren't very cost productive and make them a bit stronger."

Jonathan Cumming, associate provost for graduate academic affairs, said WVU has requested an exemption from the productivity review for all 10 programs. The university doesn't plan to put any of the programs on probation, he said.

"None of these degrees cost us anything," Cumming said. "Those courses are all offered by faculty who teach the Ph.D. programs. The coursework is identical."

Five programs are being combined into a single degree — a master of science in biomedical sciences — as part of an academic restructuring effort at WVU's Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences Center. Cumming said most of the others are intermediate degree programs that don't cost WVU extra money and serve a unique purpose.

The trend in graduate education is to pursue a doctorate, Cumming said. But graduate chemistry students at WVU who don't pass a comprehensive exam can earn a

master's degree instead, and engineering students who want to go right to work can also get a master's degree.

"It's just not popular," Cumming said. "Almost all of the students sign up for the Ph.D."

WVU administrators are revamping their approach to interdisciplinary education, and that should help boost enrollment in another master's degree program in genetics and developmental biology, Cumming said.

Overall, Flack said WVU "did pretty well" in the productivity review compared to other state schools.

Three low productivity programs were identified at Marshall University. No more than three bachelor's degree programs were flagged at any school and none were singled out at WVU, he said.

The HEPC is slated to conduct another productivity review in two years, examining different programs. The programs examined in this year's review will be reevaluated in four years, Flack said.

# The Daily Athenaeum

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

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April 22, 2009

## WVU reexamines tuition waivers

By Shay Maunz, Staff Writer

Officials at West Virginia University are examining policies relating to graduate education tuition waivers at the urging of college administrators.

WVU offers two types of tuition waivers: student merit waivers and faculty and staff quota waivers.

Student merit waivers may be awarded in full or partial amounts in an effort to recruit or retain students seeking graduate degrees.

Concerns arise when considering quota waivers, which, because of a state code, are granted to faculty and staff at universities across the state, according to Jonathan Cumming, assistant vice president for graduate education,

Cumming said this has changed in recent years, although this was originally appropriate because WVU was the only institution that could offer these programs.

Although state policy now allows the University to control its own budget, tuition, the University has not changed its policies regarding the waivers.

Cumming said that although other institutions in West Virginia offer many similar programs, faculty and staff at those institutions often still come to WVU for a better graduate education.

Part of the University's budget includes student tuition and fees.

"The way I see it, the undergraduate students are paying for the staff and faculty to get graduate degrees," he said. "And for us, this is a huge burden now on our budget."

Narvel Weese, vice president of administration and finance, did not return calls by press time.

Cummings also cited complaints from professors and college deans.

"Faculty and staff just show up and enroll," he said. "So if you're a dean or a professor you have no control over who is in your class."

Cumming and officials from the WVU Office of the Provost are in the early stages of discussing remedies to the shortcomings of the system.

"We're trying to figure out a balance between saving the budget from bleeding like it is now and providing an education to these individuals," he said.

Terry Nebel, current chair of the University's Staff Council, who will step down this summer, is worried about the impact that a change in procedure may have on the staff of WVU.

"You could have a negative backlash," he said. "I think it's rather punitive when we're trying to encourage education."

But Cumming said that those involved were working to ensure that employees at WVU would not lose their waivers. He also did not anticipate any change to policies involving student merit waivers.

# Charleston Daily Mail

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April 23, 2009

## WVU approves \$1.4 million Raymond Lane Park

by The Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. -- Morgantown is getting a new park.

The West Virginia University Board of Governors on Thursday approved construction of a park on the lot next to the new Erickson Alumni Center.

It will be named for alumnus Raymond Lane, who has donated \$1 million for the work.

The park will include a pedestrian bridge over ponds, plants, landscaping and benches. It will accommodate large and small gatherings, and provide photo opportunities.

The other \$400,000 for the project will come from WVU's capital fund. Work will begin this fall.

Lane is also donating \$500,000 to help defray the Alumni Center's building costs.

He helped make Oracle Corp. one of the nation's leading software developers and is currently managing partner in a venture capital firm.

# Charleston Daily Mail

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April 22, 2009

## WVU-Parkersburg wants to keep WVU moniker College seeks long-term contract with WVU that stipulates relationship

by Ry Rivard, Daily Mail staff

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A year after the Legislature separated it from West Virginia University, West Virginia University at Parkersburg wants to keep the WVU name.

WVU-P is one of five community colleges in the state affected by a 2008 law that separated them from their larger, four-year university partners and gave each its own board of governors.

Now the colleges are trying to establish their own identity and, in some cases, find space for classes.

The law gives each institution until July to pick a new name or keep the one it has. It was announced Monday that West Virginia State Community and Technical College in Institute would become Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College. Earlier, Fairmont State Community and Technical College became Pierpont Community and Technical College.

Name changes are contemplated at Marshall Community and Technical College in Huntington and the Community and Technical College at WVU Tech in Montgomery.

WVU-P is unlike the other four schools in that it offers four-year bachelor's degree programs as well as traditional two-year community college programs. It is also the only one trying to keep its name.

WVU-P is still trying to figure out what other ties it can maintain with WVU. In the past, it has shared technical support and human resources functions with the state's flagship university.

There are three separate arrangements being negotiated by officials from WVU and WVU-P: a memorandum of understanding, which lays out the two institutions' broad commitment to each other; an agreement for WVU to continue providing staffing and services to WVU-P; and a trademark licensing agreement.

The key part of the negotiations involves the licensing agreement, which governs how WVU's name is to be used.

"We're working out how we have their name," said Connie Dziagwa, a spokeswoman for WVU-P. "That's really what it comes down to."

She said the name WVU is important to the Parkersburg area and to WVU-P students.

WVU-P officials want a long-term agreement that the school name is to remain WVU-P, but WVU officials apparently are willing to make only a short-term commitment.

Keith Burdette, former president of the state Senate and currently a member of the WVU-P Board of Governors, said the college is basically in limbo.

"We're trying to avoid a college by contract, which is really what's involved here. We don't want to be in a perpetual negotiation over the identity of the college," Burdette said.

Both WVU and WVU-P declined to set forth their positions in detail.

The typical WVU licensing agreement lasts for one year, according to WVU spokesman Dan Kim, though he acknowledged that the WVU-P situation "is different and it is under negotiation."

WVU-P officials say they want a name that will be around in a couple of decades.

The school was founded in 1961 as the Parkersburg branch of WVU. In 1971, it became Parkersburg Community College. In 1989, it became WVU at Parkersburg.

There is concern now that the loss of the WVU name could effect enrollment. Enrollment increased 15 percent in 1989, the year of the name change to WVU-P, Dziagwa said.

In the past 20 years, both sides have benefited from the arrangement.

"It's a nice marketing tool for both institutions," said Joe Campbell, president of WVU-P's board of governors.

WVU gets to use the Parkersburg campus for its graduate programs, plus it is able to maintain a presence in West Virginia's third largest city.

Students use Parkersburg's two-year program to build up credits to transfer to WVU's main campus in Morgantown. Students also return to Parkersburg from Morgantown.

The relationship was going along well, Campbell said.

Last year's law was the culmination of a decade-long effort by the state lawmakers to allow two-year colleges more control over their own fate. Gov. Joe Manchin said at the time that community colleges should focus on workforce development instead of being used by the four-year schools as part of a "quasi-feeder system."

Manchin stepped in last month to encourage WVU and WVU-P to come to an agreement.

"He was hopeful something was going to work out," said Matt Turner, the governor's spokesman.

Campbell said there is now a lot of uncertainty for WVU-P.

"There aren't many other schools in the state that have to worry from legislative session to legislative session or from governor to governor about how we're going to be governed," Campbell said.

WVU-P also faces higher overhead costs, no matter what happens.

"The only thing it (the 2008 law) has accomplished in Parkersburg is that it's driving up administrative costs," Burdette said.

Burdette said that while people on both sides have expressed interest in cooperating, what ends up happening is another matter.

"What two people say versus what lawyers write down on paper can be two different things," Burdette said.



April 24, 2009

## WVU-P board upset over trademark deal WVU contract would expire in 2011

By MICHAEL ERB and JODY MURPHY

PARKERSBURG - An agreement approved Thursday by the West Virginia University Board of Governors would only allow West Virginia University at Parkersburg to use the college's name and logo until 2011 before renegotiating the contract.

Members of WVU-Parkersburg's board expressed disappointment with the move Thursday, saying WVU's board had ignored concerns over the limitations and short duration of the trademark contract.

Connie Dziagwa, spokeswoman for WVU-Parkersburg, said WVU's board approved a memorandum of understanding and a trademark agreement Thursday, but dismissed a letter of concern from the WVU-Parkersburg board over use of the WVU trademark.

"I think our board made it clear it was looking for a long-term commitment," she said. "That didn't happen."

The schools have been in negotiations since last year to work out 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. Negotiations stalled for a while, but picked back up last month after the WVU-P board expressed concerns over the lack of an agreement.

According to a press release from WVU Thursday, the trademark licensing agreement allows Parkersburg to use WVU-owned and registered designs, names, trademarks, service marks and official colors on merchandise and in marketing and advertising with approval of WVU's Office of Trademark Licensing. The two-year contract can be renewed by mutual consent.

"They are valuable assets subject to not only state but federal laws," interim WVU President C. Peter Magrath said in a release issued by the school. "It would be a serious mistake for us to compromise this incredible and important trademark that we have."

Magrath said he would be opposed to indefinitely expanding the agreement and recommended to the WVU board it approve the draft agreements as written.

"State lawmakers last year established a new system for two-year colleges, and we are judiciously following that obligation," board Chairman Carolyn Long said in the release.

"The arrangements approved today follow many hours of healthy discussions and research on the part of all three institutions and in the end are what we feel, as a board, are in the best operational and fiduciary interests of the institution that we govern."

The trademark agreement would allow the regional campus to use the WVU logo and name until July 1, 2011. The contract would then be renegotiated between the two schools.

"I'm disappointed that the WVU Board of Governors did not change the terms of the trademark agreement in any way," said WVU-Parkersburg board Chairman Joe Campbell. "They feel they need to protect the trademark, and I respect that, but it doesn't help us achieve a long-term solution."

WVU-Parkersburg board member Keith Burdette said it was a slap in the face.

Much of the discussion, Burdette said, revolved around the regional school possibly embarrassing the university in Morgantown, despite a list of recent scandals among WVU's core administration.

"I am almost speechless," he said. "They were so concerned about their trademark. They have done more damage to that than we have."

The WVU-Parkersburg Board of Governors will hold a special session at 5 p.m. Monday in room 2209 at WVU-Parkersburg to decide where to go next with the agreement.

"WVU-Parkersburg's Board of Governors will have to make some decisions as to how to proceed," Burdette said. "Long story short is we will have to respond in some fashion."

"Our board has been concerned over the idea of basically renting the name," Dziagwa said. "They are looking for more stability for our school."

"The board will have to consider their next step and what is going to happen."

"I am not interested in discontinuing our relationship with WVU," Campbell said, "and I don't think anyone on the board is either. We will have a discussion about this out in the open as much as we can Monday. We've gotten to a point though where there isn't a whole lot you can do in open session or even in executive session to change anything."

"Our efforts were rebuffed," Burdette said. "I think the whole Parkersburg community will be not only disappointed, but WVU just blew the whole community off."



April 23, 2009

## Judge blocks Lang hearing Says WVU violated his due process

BY CASSIE SHANER The Dominion Post

A Monongalia County Circuit Court judge ruled that former WVU Provost Gerald Lang won't face an academic integrity hearing regarding his role in the Bresch scandal.

Judge Susan Tucker said WVU officials "acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner" and violated Lang's due process rights in their investigation of academic misconduct charges against him.

She granted the petition Lang filed to stop the hearing.

WVU has the option to pursue alternative proceedings that protect Lang's due process rights, but university officials are not sure what their next step will be.

"West Virginia University will be reviewing its options and considering how to proceed once we receive the judge's written order," WVU spokesman Dan Kim said.

Tucker's order was not available Wednesday, and Kim said there's no precedent to determine how an academic integrity review should proceed in the event that a judge intervenes.

Lang filed the petition in February, asking the court to block the academic integrity hearing, which relates to WVU's decision to award Heather Bresch — the daughter of Gov. Joe Manchin and chief operating officer of Mylan Inc. — an executive MBA degree that an investigative panel concluded she did not earn.

Lang claimed several officials involved — including Marjorie McDiarmid, WVU's academic integrity officer; Mary Brandt, WVU's vice president for legal affairs and general counsel; and Beverly Kerr, deputy general counsel — had a conflict of interest due to their involvement in the Bresch matter.

Tucker said he was "absolutely correct."

"I'm not saying that it was deliberate by any means, but it's just unavoidable," Tucker said. "If it's not clear, it certainly poses the appearance of impropriety."

Tucker said the attorneys for the general counsel's office at WVU meet the definition of a firm, and a conflict of interest for one member of a firm constitutes a conflict of interest for everyone.

Lang had contended that attorneys in the WVU investigation of academic misconduct, and in the planned hearing, should have recused themselves as they previously reported to former WVU General Counsel Alex Macia — who attended the

October 2007 meeting at which the decision was made to award Bresch the degree — or were involved in other aspects of the matter.

“The issue of conflict of interest is a fairly simple problem that might have been worked out and corrected if the parties had tried to do so,” Tucker said. “I regret that they did not try to do that.”

Lang also listed the WVU Board of Governors and interim WVU President C. Peter Magrath as respondents in his petition. They filed to dismiss the case, but Tucker denied those motions on Wednesday.

“The WVU Board of Governors and President Magrath stand in a position of guiding the university and are ultimately responsible for what goes on within the university,” Tucker said.

Former WVU College of Business and Economics Dean R. Stephen Sears and Cyril Logar, former B&E associate dean of academic affairs, filed motions to intervene in Lang’s case that were also dismissed Wednesday. Tucker said they were not filed in a timely manner and would have delayed court proceedings until after the date of the academic integrity hearing.

Tucker’s secretary refused to provide copies of the motions filed by Sears and Logar on Wednesday. She said those documents would be available after Tucker’s order was filed and the case file was transferred to the Monongalia County Circuit Clerk’s office.

According to the Associated Press, Sears and Logar’s motions argued that they would be subject to the same conflicts of interest as Lang in proceedings planned against them.

Attorneys for the parties involved in the case declined to comment after Wednesday’s hearing.

Debra Scudiere, counsel for Kerr and Brandt, said she wasn’t sure whether her clients would file an appeal.

“We’re just hearing the judge’s ruling, and we’ll figure out what we’re doing,” Scudiere said.

J. Michael Benninger, Lang’s attorney, did not return a call to The Dominion Post in time for this report.

# The Daily Athenaeum

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April 22, 2009

## Logar, Sears seek to join Lang lawsuit

Former Dean of the College of Business and Economics R. Stephen Sears and Marketing professor Cyril Logar have both filed motions to intervene in former West Virginia University provost Gerald Lang's hearing, which takes place today.

Lang filed a petition for a writ of prohibition Feb. 24, seeking to halt an academic integrity hearing relating to the retroactive awarding of an Executive Master's of Business Administration degree to Heather Bresch, Gov. Joe Manchin's daughter, while Lang was provost.

Sears and Logar are facing academic misconduct hearings similar to the one that Lang's petition seeks to halt.

In his motion to intervene, Logar claimed that if Lang is dismissed from his academic integrity hearing as a result of his trial, his own due process rights would be violated.

"Should Petitioner Lang settle the instant action and be dismissed from having to attend the hearing, Dr. Logar would remain a party to a hearing fraught with the same conflicts of interest that currently exist," the motion read.

In the motion filed by Sears, he said that the conflicts of interest that Lang's petition seeks to remedy will also apply to Sears at his hearing.

"Dr. Sears will suffer additional deprivations of procedural due process if the Academic Integrity process continues in its current, conflict-laden form," the document read.

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# Charleston Daily Mail

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April 20, 2009

## Out-of-state students upset at tuition hikes Many WVU students say it's not time to up costs due to economy

by Ian Shorts, For the Daily Mail

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. -- West Virginia University students from out of state are disgruntled about a proposed tuition increase for next year.

WVU Interim President Peter Magrath said last week the school will have to raise tuition by as much as 4 percent. For West Virginia residents - now paying about \$5,100 a year - that would mean an increase of about \$204.

Tuition for non-residents is \$15,768 a year now. They would be forced to shell out \$630 more if a 4 percent increase is approved.

Brad Burns, a junior from Beaver, Pa. said he is not looking forward to having to pay even more to go to the university. As it stands right now, he estimates that he will be graduating with almost \$70,000 in loan debt for his mechanical engineering degree.

With the economy the way it is, Burns said, he has had a hard time securing money to pay for his education in the first place, let alone finding the extra money the university is asking for. WVU raised tuition by 8 percent last year.

"It is harder and harder to get money, and they are asking for more of it," Burns said.

Freshman exercise physiology major Constance Johnson said she was under the impression that WVU was supposed to do as much as it could to keep costs down.

To pay for her first year of school, Johnson took out \$22,000 in loans. Only a few blocks from her home in Philadelphia is Temple University. She said she is considering transferring to Temple now because of the rising costs at WVU.

"If it keeps getting more expensive, I will go somewhere else," she said.

"It is just not the time to be raising prices," said junior Marc Grabuski, also of Philadelphia.

Grabuski, a business management major, said although he does not pay for his entire education himself, he does not like the fact that his parents will have to pay even more for him to go to the university. He said he understands that many students are not as lucky as he is.

"It is going to become a struggle for every student to pay bills," Grabuski said.

Junior Bryan Thompson of Pearl River, N.Y., said, "This is only going to make things that much harder."

Thompson said most of what he pays for school comes out of his own pocket. With the economy the way it is, the university should not be allowed to raise prices on students, he said.

Freshman criminology major Andrea Williams of Camden, N.J., said she believes that if the school decides to take the extra money, it should spend it to bolster academics. She said too much emphasis is placed on athletic spending at WVU.

"I understand this is a football school, but it needs to change a little bit," Williams said. "I think that prices wouldn't go up if they would be more cost-efficient."

Brian VanGongen, a sophomore from Hillsborough, N.J., said 4 percent is a lot of money for him.

But VanDongen, a secondary education major, said he understands that times are tough for everybody now, including the university.

"They've got to do what they've got to do."



April 22, 2009

## Malhas new Tech engineering chief

Faris A. Malhas has been named dean of the Leonard C. Nelson College of Engineering, Sciences and Mathematics at the West Virginia University Institute of Technology, WVU Tech officials announced last week.

Malhas, professor and chair of the Department of Environmental Engineering and Engineering Mechanics at the University of Dayton in Ohio, will assume his new duties effective July 1.

"I am excited for Tech to have such a dynamic and enthusiastic leader for its college of engineering and sciences," WVU Tech Campus Provost Scott M. Hurst said. "I look forward to working with him on the challenges of our wonderful college."

A licensed professional engineer in the state of Florida, Malhas has been in academia more than 22 years and a practicing consultant structural engineer for over two decades. He was the founding coordinator of the civil engineering program at the University of North Florida and head of the civil engineering group and associate professor at Bradley University.

Malhas has also taught at the University of Bahrain, University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Jordan.

Last summer, his best-selling textbook on the design of steel structures was published, and he is currently working on a textbook about structural analysis.

Malhas' research interests include durability of concrete structures, repair of concrete structures, seismic behavior of precast concrete structures and most recently the safety and strengthening of bridge structures.

He is an active member of the American Concrete Institute (ACI), American Society of Civil Engineers, American Institute of Steel Construction and the Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute. Currently, he chairs ACI Committee 444-Experimental Analysis of Concrete Structures.

Malhas received bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. He also holds a Master of Science degree in engineering mechanics and a doctorate in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He is married to Vicky Abdo and has four children: Ameen, Sami, Tamara and Layla.

April 21, 2009

## Marshall receives grant for engineering complex

HUNTINGTON -- Marshall University has received \$245,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that will go toward the design, planning and construction of the Advanced Engineering and Applied Technology Complex.

Dr. John Maher, vice president for research at Marshall University, said the funds are critical for planning the next phase of the Advanced Engineering and Applied Technology Complex, which will bring together engineering, biotechnology and technology transfer capabilities.

The complex would have potentially received up to \$40 million from a bill in the West Virginia Legislature that would have directed \$10 million in bonds to higher education for improvement projects. The bill died, however, on the last night of the Legislature's 60-day session, which came to a close April 11.

"These funds will help to educate a future generation of West Virginians as we strive to give our children a step up in our increasingly competitive global marketplace," Rep. Nick J. Rahall said in a prepared release.



April 24, 2009

## Faculty Senate approves new general curriculum

By Ryan Bloomfield

The Faculty Senate approved a proposal to create a new general education curriculum Thursday.

The proposal, submitted by the Core Foundations Ad Hoc Committee, was approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on Monday to go on the agenda for next month's Senate's meeting. However, the proposal was brought to the floor early in Thursday's meeting to get it approved before the end of the academic year. The Core Foundations Ad Hoc Committee has been working on the new core curriculum for more than three years.

The new core curriculum emphasizes critical thinking and would replace the Marshall Plan.

Cheryl Brown, ad hoc committee chair, said getting the proposal approved early is a great thing.

"There's a time crunch for activities taking place over the summer," Brown said. "The plan is for faculty members to break up into groups, create syllabi and come up with sample classes for a different way for things to be done. We've been working on the curriculum for three years and we're hoping to get it moving."

The proposal was approved as recommended except for two amendments. Marty Laubach, a senator and professor of sociology, suggested two amendments to the curriculum. The first, amended under Core No. 2, amended "science" to say "physical or natural science." The amendment was approved. The second was to include three hours of multicultural and international courses to the new core curriculum. After a 19 to 19 vote, Cam Brammer, chair of the Faculty Senate, broke the tie in favor of the vote.

"I thought it was the right thing to do," Brammer said. "It is important that it is written and it will be done."

Several senators who supported the recommendation said they think there is room for improving it. Maurice Lockridge, assistant professor in the Lewis College of Business, said the proposal is good, but he would like to see financial literacy addressed in the core curriculum. Eric Arnold, interim chair and assistant professor in the College of Education and Human Services, said he would like a healthful lifestyle class added.

The senate's recommendation now goes to Marshall President Stephen Kopp for a decision.



April 24, 2009

## Organizations get word on allocation of MU student fees

By Logan Bush

Nineteen departments on campus are one step closer to receiving funds from student fees.

The President's Advisory Committee on Activity Allocations has sent its recommendations regarding the distribution of student fees to University President Stephen Kopp, who will make the final decision as to how much money each department will receive.

The committee recommended a total of \$2,588,961 in student fees to be given to 19 departments. The requested total for all 19 departments was \$2,869,060, but cuts had to be made because of the economy.

The largest recommended allocations goes to Student Health Services, which provides discounted medical care to students, with \$805,060. That is an increase of \$55,000 from the last fiscal year. The requested increase is intended to help fund the university's Student Health Contract and an additional counselor.

Student Body President Matt James said the current recession made it difficult to give some organizations privilege over others.

"The committee ultimately decided to focus on things that were of immediate concern to students such as health services," said James, who is the committee chair.

The second and third largest most funded organizations in 2008-09, Marshall Artist Series (\$212,700) and Student Activities (\$202,100), did not see an increase from last fiscal year's allocations.

The committee includes nine members, five students, four faculty members and two advisers watch over the committee to make sure the numbers add up.

The student body president is always a member and appoints the other four students on the committee. The four faculty members are elected through the Faculty Senate.

Each of the 19 organizations sent a representative to present its budget and answer any questions the committee may have had.

"There's always disagreements because it's faculty and students," James said. "But these are all compromises that we voted on."

The presentations for the organizations took place on Feb. 16 and 23. After the presentations, the committee discussed the requests for several hours to decide where

the money is needed most. If the committee gives out too much money then tuition rises, and if not enough is given out, students won't be able to take advantage of some of the services at Marshall, James said.

# Charleston Daily Mail

DAILYMAIL.COM

April 24, 2009

## Professor establishing meteorology program at Marshall Educator hopes major will be ready by fall 2010

by Jake Stump, Daily Mail Capitol Reporter

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. -- You're more likely to see it raining bullfrogs than to find a higher learning institution in West Virginia that offers a meteorology degree.

But Marshall University professor Kevin Law is changing the forecast. He's on track to establishing the first meteorology program in the state.

After all, the Upshur County native had to go out-of-state himself, to Ohio State, to receive a master's degree and a doctorate's degree in atmospheric science.

Marshall students can currently study meteorology as a minor, which was established last year due to Law's efforts. There are about 10 students who've selected it as a minor.

Law hopes the new major will be available at Marshall for weather enthusiasts by fall 2010. He believes a solid meteorology program will help retain West Virginia students.

"I went to WVU for undergrad and studied geography," Law said. "They said that was the closest tie-in to meteorology."

Law graduated from Ohio State in 2006 and started teaching at Marshall later that year.

He teaches geography classes as well as courses for the meteorology minor, which include intro to meteorology, severe storms, weather analysis and climatology.

The School of Journalism is also developing a broadcast meteorology course, Law said.

But not all meteorologists want to be a local TV celebrity, he added.

Law is happier researching and studying weather behind-the-scenes.

"Most people think of TV, when it comes to meteorology," he said. "But that's only a small percentage of meteorologists. The broadcasting field is highly competitive. In smaller markets, they rotate them in and out and you have to start at the bottom and work your way up."

If you're not cut for the television screen, there's a flurry of job opportunities at atmospheric research stations across the country, he said. Private companies, such as airlines and utility entities, also rely on meteorologists, Law noted.

Meteorological duties tend to be more intricate than simply reading from a monitor and pointing at weather maps.

"You study the atmosphere and the physical processes that go on in the atmosphere," Law said. "It's mathematical. You're studying how the air moves and how the temperature changes. That's where physics and math come into play."

Law has reached out to other departments, including math and physics, to incorporate into his meteorology program.

But despite all the calculus, thermodynamics and equations you can stuff into the art of meteorology, no one will ever project the perfect forecast, Law said.

"You can't perfectly simulate the atmosphere," he said. "Like an old professor told me, 'There's no way to have a perfect forecast unless you can actually account for every molecule in the atmosphere.' That's impossible. So you're never going to have a perfect forecast."

But there's room for improvement.

Most meteorologists must be skilled in geography, which is why WVU urged Law to take up that science as a substitute for meteorology.

"To most people it seems like a stretch," he said. "But you've got to know where things are located.

"As a forecaster, you've got to know the local phenomenon. The local conditions will affect the weather. If you can't beat a computer model, you're not really adding any value. Like Tony Cavalier, they've got to add that value and know those local conditions better than a computer. A computer just sees grid points. You've got to be able to figure out what will happen between those grid points. You might have a little more snow in this area, maybe not as much here in another region. A computer can't see that."

In addition to teaching, Law is part of the West Virginia Climate Center and a member of the American Association of State Climatologists. He assists researchers, engineers, attorneys and government agencies obtain weather and climate data they need. Most common requests are monthly/daily temperature and precipitation data.

Law also will be aiding volunteer weather buffs monitor rain, hail and snow in the Mountain State as part of the 42-state Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network beginning May 1. The 12-year-old network has about 13,000 volunteers nationwide who help the National Weather Service keep track of weather patterns in their local areas.

The goal of the program is to provide a more dense precipitation network that will supplement existing observations.

Law said he planned to use precipitation data from the program in his meteorology courses. To sign-up for the program, go to [www.CoCoRaHS.org](http://www.CoCoRaHS.org).

Collecting precipitation amounts is part of the job, and as extreme as Law might go with his weather passion.

He's never chased tornadoes or hurricanes and said he'd rather work behind-the-scenes gathering data and analysis.

No matter your interest in weather, it will always be around affecting your life one way or another.

"There's a reason why the National Weather Service is in the Department of Commerce," Law said. "It affects everything. It affects general commerce, travel and shopping. When there's a big winter storm out, people don't go out and shop. It affects the local economy. It affects your insurance. Nationally, if there's a big hurricane in Florida, we're really all affected."

April 22, 2009

## West Liberty to celebrate new university status

By The Associated Press

WEST LIBERTY, W.Va. -- West Liberty State College is throwing a weeklong party to celebrate its new status as a university.

The Northern Panhandle college will become West Liberty University on May 3.

The University Week celebration begins April 27 and runs through May 3. Events include concerts, carnival rides, a flash animation festival and art displays.

West Liberty's university status was approved in November by the Higher Education Policy Commission.

Founded in 1836 as West Liberty Academy, the school is West Virginia's oldest higher education institution.

April 24, 2009

## Wheeling college offers free classes to unemployed

By The Associated Press

WHEELING, W.Va. -- West Virginia Northern Community College is offering workers who've lost their jobs an opportunity to make a fresh start.

The Wheeling school plans to offer free summer and fall classes to laid-off workers that will provide training for other jobs.

Dean of enrollment management Janet Fike says the goal is to help jobless workers find other employment in the local area.

Tuition and fees will be waived for West Virginia residents who've lost their jobs or have been dislocated within the past 180 days.

The free programs range from appliance repair to real estate. Fike says full-time students can complete most of the programs in one year.

## More Meaningful Accreditation

CHICAGO -- Sylvia Manning has heard all the complaints about accreditation before -- heck, she thought a lot of them herself during her nearly 40 years as a college administrator. Colleges find the process to be a mere obligation because it focuses on minimum standards and too often produces little of value to help the institutions improve. Critics who want more higher education accountability question whether accreditation is rigorous and transparent enough. Potential educational innovators say the process is inflexible and discourages creative approaches.

The critiques flow largely from the fact that higher education accreditation seeks to do two totally different things: ensure a minimum level of quality (with the accreditors in effect playing a compliance role on behalf of the federal government) and encourage individual colleges to improve themselves.

Manning, who nine months ago became president of the country's largest regional accreditor, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, almost immediately appointed a committee to rethink the commission's approval process with those and other critiques in mind. This week, at the commission's annual meeting here, she unveiled a proposal to overhaul the accrediting agency's process for renewing its approval for already accredited colleges.

Its most distinctive feature is that it would clearly separate "compliance" from "improvement." Colleges would be required to build "portfolios" of data and materials, documenting (through more frequent peer reviews) their compliance with the association's many standards, with much of the information being made public. On a parallel track, or "pathway," colleges would have the flexibility to propose their own projects or themes as the focus of the self-improvement piece of their accreditation review, and would be judged (once the projects were approved by a peer team) by how well they carried out the plan. (Colleges the commission deems to be troubled would have a "pathway" chosen for them, to address their shortcomings.)

The commission's goals in this proposal, which Manning makes clear is nascent and open to significant comment and potential revision by the group's members, are to ensure rigor and transparency in the compliance part of the review process (by potentially increasing the frequency with which colleges' portfolios are reviewed and making results public), reduce the paperwork burden on institutions (by making the portfolio electronic and limiting the written report for the portfolio to 50 pages), and make the process more valuable for colleges by letting them largely define for themselves where they want to improve and what they want to accomplish.

In lifting the veil off the proposal in a presentation to presidents of member colleges at the commission's annual meeting Sunday, Manning began her presentation with her riff on a Beatles song. It has troubled her, Manning said, that so many colleges seem to view accreditation as having little enough value that they wouldn't necessarily seek it if they weren't required to have it for their students to receive federal financial aid. Manning chanted: "Would you still need me, would you still feed me, without Title IV?"

"We want to make accreditation so valuable to institutions that they would do it without Title IV," she said in an interview after the presentation. "The only way we can protect the improvement piece, and make it valuable to institutions to aim high, is if we separate it from the compliance piece."

The Higher Learning Commission is not the first of the country's six regional accrediting groups to go in this direction; the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges, in revamping its process for accrediting colleges in 2002, required each college to develop its own "quality enhancement plan" that is separate from its compliance review, and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges has also moved along these lines.

Officials at the North Central accreditor said they had learned from their peers. But they also said they hoped that the breadth of the commission's proposal would contribute to the sense that regional accreditors are listening and responding to the needs of their member colleges and, where appropriate, critical policy makers.

### **Serving Two Masters**

Accreditation was broadsided by the Education Department of Margaret Spellings, whose Commission on the Future of Higher Education accused higher education's peer review process both of failing to fulfill its federally delegated role of quality assurance with sufficient rigor, and of stifling institutional creativity and innovation with excessive straitjacketing. In her speech Sunday, Manning said that commentators often say that accreditation's dual roles of quality assurance and improvement lead to "creative tension," but that she wasn't at all sure that tension created anything helpful.

Mainly what happens in the current structure, she said, is that the compliance role is so onerous and so dominates the process that, in too many cases, colleges fail to get anything meaningful out of the improvement portion. That, she said, is why separating the two is so essential.

As initially conceptualized, the commission's revised process would have institutions build electronic portfolios made up of (1) an annual institutional data update the accreditor already uses, (2) a collection of "evidence of quality and capacity" drawn from existing sources (other accrediting reports), federal surveys and audits, and a "50-page, evidence-based report that demonstrates fulfillment of the criteria for accreditation," based largely on the information in (1) and (2), commission documents say. A panel of peer reviewers would "rigorously" review the data (without a site visit) at various intervals -- how much more frequently than the current 10-year accreditation review would probably depend on the perceived health of the college -- and make a recommendation on whether to approve the institution for re-accreditation.

And importantly, given criticism from the Spellings Commission and others about the perceived secrecy or at least opaqueness of accreditation, the commission would create a "dashboard" of information from the portfolios that would be widely published.

The "pathways" process would carry on in conjunction with the portfolio review. The Higher Learning Commission had created one alternative to its standard accreditation process, the Academic Quality Improvement Program, a decade ago, and over the years colleges or members have proposed more than a dozen others, Manning said.

The goal of the revised process, she said, would be to give institutions deemed to be in solid condition wide berth to use the time and energy the accreditation process requires to best effect for their own purposes (within reason and with the approval of the commission).

A college that was already intending to undertake a strategic planning process might use the accreditation self-study for that purpose; another might decide it wanted to focus on assessment of student achievement, design a project and set goals for what it hopes to accomplish, and have the results reviewed by peers at the end. Another possibility that particularly excites Manning and Lynn Priddy, the commission's vice president for accreditation services, would be to have several institutions collaborate on a joint project, as several colleges have requested. "People have asked us, 'Why couldn't we band together with institutions we would choose, peers or those with shared interests, to do a joint self-study around a shared project or a shared aspiration?' " Manning said.

One major step of peer approval would occur near the beginning -- "we need a way to ascertain that what is done is significant and has scope; we can't deal with institutions saying, 'We propose to study how we're going to re-carpet all the residence halls,' " Manning said -- and then another after the results of the study have been posted, with a visit aimed at documenting the project's achievements and outcomes.

Only a college that gained the recommendation of its peers on both the "pathway" and the portfolio pieces of the process, as commission members envision it, would earn continued recognition. The two parts would be linked in some fashion during the process, but exactly how is one of the many details HLC officials acknowledge they haven't fully worked through, as they begin what is likely to be a three-year process of developing and refining the reaccreditation proposal.

### **Cheers and Concerns**

Reaction to the commission's draft proposal from officials of its member colleges, judged from the responses to Manning's presentation and comments from provosts and professors in the hallways and exhibit hall, was largely positive. Many commenters said they appreciated the idea of increased flexibility, and several said they would welcome the opportunity to use information prepared for other accreditors to fulfill North Central's demands.

As with the prospect of any significant change in the often change-averse world of higher education, though, there were qualms. One speaker wondered how much information would be made public; another asked if the commission's staff would be qualified to judge the potentially immense diversity of the pathways institutions might propose.

And several seemed concerned that the changes might be perceived as deemphasizing the "compliance" aspects of the commission's accreditation process. "The portfolio portion really should be what's tied to continued accreditation," said one member of the audience. "As soon as you tie the pathway portion into that, you make it a very different exercise, as we're going to want to make a good case, to make ourselves look good."

How will the Department of Education respond? another asked. "If we go too far into the pathways approach and leave out too much" of what we do now in terms of quality

assurance, he said, the government "may decide to take that area over and require more regulation."

— Doug Lederman

April 22, 2009

## Cautious Backing for Obama Plan

Even as college financial aid directors continue intense debate over President Obama's plan to end the guaranteed student loan program, most of the major higher education groups signed a letter Tuesday urging members of Congress to back the proposal, saying the major benefit -- using the savings to guarantee a permanent stream of funding for Pell Grants -- outweighs concerns about the change.

Representatives of the House and Senate are preparing to meet to resolve differences between the two chambers' budget resolutions, which set the broad terms of the process by which Congress will craft the 2010 federal budget.

The House version largely endorsed Obama's proposal to originate all loans out of the direct loan program instead of the competing bank-based program, and to use the proceeds -- which the Congressional Budget Office estimated at \$94 billion over 10 years -- on additional aid for students. The central idea: shifting funding from Pell Grants to the mandatory side of the budget, ensuring an annual increase and avoiding the whims of lawmakers. The Senate budget proposal supported the idea of setting aside funds for Pell Grants but did not back the student loan plan.

The Obama plan has generated vociferous opposition from student loan providers and raised significant concerns for some financial aid officers, since about two-thirds of colleges participate in the bank-based loan program and generally like it. The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators sent a letter last month discouraging Congress from using the budget process to make policy changes in the loan programs, citing its members' concerns.

Apart from that, higher education groups had been largely silent on the Obama plan, to the increasing dismay of groups that advocate on behalf of students. They had begun asking whether college leaders were willing to forgo the idea of a Pell Grant entitlement, which for many higher education officials have seen as the holy grail for low-income students, because they did not want to anger lenders or lose some of the benefits they now gain from the guaranteed loan program.

Tuesday's letter, which was signed by 24 college groups, including five of the six major "presidential" associations -- the exception being the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities -- walks a fairly delicate line. It "strongly" urges Congress to seize the "one-in-a-lifetime opportunity" to create a Pell Grant entitlement, to "bring stability and predictability" to the program. (Sarah Flanagan, NAICU's vice president for government relations and policy development, said of her group's position: "NAICU, while positively inclined towards many aspects of the president's budget, has reserved taking a position on the package until its members have had a chance to fully consider the implications of the plan for their campuses.")

And it recognizes that such a change would be possible only because of the proposed conversion to 100 percent direct lending and the accounting of Pell Grant costs, a

confluence of factors that the groups note "has not happened before and is not likely to happen again."

The letter acknowledges the controversy in higher education over the elimination of the Federal Family Education Loan Program, because "it asks colleges and universities to forgo longstanding lending arrangements that have worked successfully in favor of a system with which some are familiar."

Despite those concerns, the letter concludes, most colleges "are open to considering [the loan plan] in order to secure an authentic Pell Grant entitlement."

— Doug Lederman

## Study paints picture of collegiate mental health

By GENARO C. ARMAS, ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. -- Ever since campus counseling centers were established in the 1940s, college officials have known that the prevalence and severity of students' mental health problems were rising. They just didn't know by how much.

A pilot study released Monday by the Center for the Study of Collegiate Mental Health, at Penn State University, hopes to fill that void. Organizers call it a first-of-its kind effort by college counseling centers designed to get an up-to-date picture of mental health trends affecting higher education.

Most schools collect data of counseling center clients on their own. Until now, though, there have been no national data to help study perceived trends, organizers said.

"Mental health affects every aspect of a college student's functioning," said Ben Locke, executive director of the center. "The earlier you intervene in mental health issues, the more likely you are to be successful in treating it."

The numbers will further help colleges and universities equip themselves to support students, Locke said.

The Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors does a separate annual survey of its members. That survey estimated that about 1 in 10 college students seek treatment from campus counseling centers.

But the Penn State study is the first to get data from the counseling center clients themselves, Locke said.

"This is actual data from the counseling centers: the clients who are coming in, what they're saying," said Robert Rando, the director of counseling and wellness services at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. "It's accurate in that way, and no one has done that."

There is concern about the increased severity of mental health problems counseling centers are seeing among student clients, in part because of the increased use of medications such as Prozac by high school students, Rando said.

The collaboration began four years ago, but data collection began only in fall 2008.

The effort had been in the works before the high-profile campus shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007 and Northern Illinois University last year.

The killing of 33 people, including the gunman, at Virginia Tech and five people at Northern Illinois put a spotlight on campus counseling services and risk reduction, said

Dennis Heitzmann, director of counseling and psychological services at Penn State.

"What this effort will do will keep our work in the forefront, identify the importance of our function before the administration, parents and students themselves," Heitzmann said.

More than 130 schools nationwide are registered with the center. Of them, 66 participated in the initial study, with responses from more than 28,000 students who received mental health services in fall 2008.

Each counseling center asked clients to answer standardized questions, with the data pooled nationally. All data were anonymous.

Among the study's findings:

- One percent of students who answered a question about binge drinking reported going on a binge 10 or more times in the previous two weeks. Nearly half of those respondents said they had seriously considered suicide in the past.
- The vast majority (93 percent) of students who responded to a question about campus violence had little to no fear of losing control and acting violently.
- The 7 percent considered to have strong fears were most likely to be male and said they had previously harmed another person. They also tended to have experienced a cluster of other symptoms, such as a fear of having a panic attack or suicidal thoughts.

The results "don't translate into a guaranteed assessment or reliable profile at any point, but they offer a starting point in assessing risk in counseling center clients," Locke said.

The center has received \$45,000 in funding over the past five years, Locke said. The Jed Foundation, a nonprofit that describes itself as trying to reduce suicides and emotional distress among college students, is listed as a past contributor.

The center also requires members to pay a \$150 annual fee. In addition, researchers have received about \$100,000 in in-kind funding from Titanium Software.